

A DAUGHTER
of DALE
EMERSON
GIFFORD
TAYLOR



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A DAUGHTER OF
DALE



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BY

EMERSON GIFFORD TAYLOR



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TO
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A DAUGHTER OF DALE

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I

CONCERNS DR. HARE AND THE PATRIOTIC LADIES

THERE are not many men in America who have achieved more in their various professions than the placid old gentleman the undergraduates called Denny Hare. He was the comrade of twenty feats of scholarly exploration with the famous Germans or Frenchmen who came to Dale each winter; the great foreign societies wrote him their thanks for accepting their elections; there were only four universities in this country whose honorary degrees he cared to receive. The honors of his long life and its splendid activities were what the world liked to talk to Denny Hare about, thinking so to please him. But those who knew him best, and strangers who were artful, found that to delight the old gentleman most,—and, by the way, to convince him of

one's own excellence,—one had best center the talk about New England family history, or about the house on Maple Street, where six generations of his name had been born and had died before Professor Hare came into its possession.

It was a plain old place, not comparable in the eyes of the architects with the other old mansion the professor had inherited up in the country, half-way from Ashley to Riverton. But the clapboards were those Zenas Hare had put on, the paneling of the parlor Squire Henry Hare imported from the old country, along with the cloudy glass in the windows, on which three of the Revolution's heroes and its greatest traitor had scratched their initials with one of their hostess's diamonds. From its front door Archibald Hare rode away to follow Washington; to the same door came the professor's wife in all the bloom of her beauty; thither they carried the dead son, while baby Barbara in Hannah's arms laughed and played with the tassels of the carriage curtains. It was a plain old place, but Professor Hare loved it as a part of his own self.

That is why Mrs. Tew's associates in the patriotic society feared greatly for her, while admiring her boldness, when she undertook an embassy to her brother in the matter of the tablet.

She came to luncheon and talked to him till

nearly dusk. This when college was opening and Dale was busiest.

“ You really must, Winthrop.”

Mrs. Tew’s theory of dealing with her brother was based on the success attending those interviews when she had allowed him not so much as a gesture. To crush swiftly and heavily, to smother his fire, was the only method, she knew, did she wish to win the battle. Afterward she was wont to let him retain side-arms and colors, so to speak ; but in the meantime, on the field, her attack never faltered, her cannonade never slackened.

She felt more elated than ever at her victory on this day, for it was on ground of her brother’s own choosing that she beat him, and her cause was desperate. The forces had met in his library, whither even Barbara might not penetrate without knocking. And Mrs. Tew had demanded the right to carry out a plan concerning the old house, whose every panel and shingle she knew to be in his eyes something sacred.

“ Really,” was Mrs. Tew’s final remark,— and her tone forbade appeal,— “ it ’s your duty as a citizen of Oldport.” She made the mistake of showing clemency to a half-beaten adversary. “ I should think you ’d like it there, too.”

“ You have rare discernment, sister. I *should*

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like your tablet there, of all things. The oration, too. That 'll be delivered in the front yard, I suppose. On a platform, eh?"

"Of course. Draped in the national and the colonial colors."

"I see. There 'll be a crowd?"

"Not a very big one."

The professor came bolt upright in his chair. "I can't have it, Polly. It 's impossible. It 's absurd. Think how a bronze tablet 's going to look on those white clapboards. And think how fine it 's going to be for the plaster and wall-paper—your great-grandfather's, Polly—when they put the bolts through. Think—"

This was nothing at all. Mrs. Tew merely eyed him coldly.

"There are no bolts about it," she replied calmly. "They screw it on. It 's quite light and small, you know."

The professor stopped striding about the room. Something like a smile came into his eyes.

"So?" he asked, and then seemed to fall a-thinking. "Small? And only screwed on? Well—"

"I knew you 'd approve, once it was explained. And it 'll show people that the Society really has an object, you know. An outward and visible sign."

The professor's face was expressionless.

"We're so anxious that everybody should appreciate what we're doing," Mrs. Tew continued.

The professor nodded vigorously. "So they do, my dear. At its full worth. It's a noble work."

"Is n't it!" Mrs. Tew closed her eyes, and mentally added one more item on the score she owed her brother. She felt she was earning all the distinction her office carried. "So glad you feel so. It's a great shame to have people—these boys and girls—forget the great things that have been done right here in their midst—the things that have actually *happened*, you know. Just think how interesting it'll be for them to know—and have it marked—that right here in this house the famous meeting was held. Why, it helped start the Revolution!"

Professor Hare looked at her through half-shut eyes. "Of course," he murmured, "they really met up in the old Bronson house."

"I know. But that's all torn down, Winthrop."

"Exactly."

Mrs. Tew began again. "It's the spirit of the thing, Winthrop. You agree that these great events are worth commemorating, don't you?"

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"Yes, indeed."

"Well, then. Is n't that just what we 're trying to do?"

"But why a tablet on this house, Polly?"

"You don't *know* the meeting was n't held here. It was the manse then, was n't it? And was n't Parson Hare the leader of them all here in Oldport?"

"We like to think so, surely. He gave a son to the cause, at any rate."

"Well, then!" Mrs. Tew fastened the last button of her white gloves and picked up her card-case. She was quitting the field with honor.

"What difference do a few yards make in the location of the tablet? They held the meeting just *about* here, anyway. You can't do better than that, Winthrop."

Professor Hare dropped into his big chair again. "Don't go yet," he urged. "I want to hear a lot more. And we don't see each other very often, Polly. How's Ned?"

"Ned? Splendidly, I hear. He's at Aiken now."

"And the boy?"

"Dr. Dallas writes *so* well of him. He's perfect of his form."

"Good! I hope to have Dallas's nephew, young Gardiner, partly under me, you know.

Odd, is n't it? And he 's a capital fellow. I expect a great deal of Paul."

"I 've heard of him." Mrs. Tew paused a moment to examine her glove-tips. Her next question seemed to come in spite of herself. "I have n't seen Babbie for ages. Where does the child keep herself nowadays?"

Babbie!

If for a half-hour the old man had not thought of her, it was that he might joy the more in her when again he could summon her to his presence. And now he had been struggling — forgive him the word! — with Mrs. Tew. For him it was coming into the light once more. He forgave his sister much because she had asked for his darling. There had hardly been need of a battle if Mrs. Tew had used a little strategy.

He told all about her. There was not so much, perhaps — a young girl's journal, with the thoughts written in a cipher he confessed he could not always read. But each of the things he saw and heard or guessed the old man related, fondling every least memory, the awe that belongs to great places over him when he told the mysteries of what to him was a sanctuary. He enjoyed her life as one ministering at an altar where beauty is and comfort, both veiled yet felt present.

"To-day—just now, that is, for she was down at the mission all the morning—she 's over at the Gregorys'. Little Sallie and she are great friends."

"I 'm glad of that. The Gregorys are very nice, indeed. And she ought to see some young people too."

"As many as she wants."

Mrs. Tew did not appear satisfied. "You must *make* her, if she does n't want to. It 's bad for a girl to spend too much time with old folks, as I 've said a dozen times."

The professor laughed. He would like to hear Babbie's answer to that. "She must never visit you and Ned again, then," he declared solemnly.

She echoed his laugh, though he had guessed at quite a different reply. Then Mrs. Tew rose and prepared her final leave-taking. But for some reason the chilling fear came over her that, after all, her brother might refuse permission for the tablet. It seemed vaguely necessary to get his signature under a written promise, or some kind of lawyer-thing. She tried for an opening, starting, for no reason, from the mass of letters and papers on his great work-table.

"Busy as ever, I suppose," remarked Mrs. Tew as she stood up.

"Busier. I'm acting dean just now, in McHugh's absence. It gives me a good deal of work."

"Such as—"

"Oh, discipline and the boys' money troubles mostly. They will go wild now and then, you know. But they come out all right always," he added quickly.

"I don't believe their crimes are very serious. Do they steal?" asked Mrs. Tew, twitching out a smile. This was not very interesting.

"Do they what?"

"Steal, or—"

The professor laughed loud and rather longer than seemed reasonable. And in the midst of his mirth, he picked up a letter from the top of the pile and folded it away in his pocket.

"They are a good lot, on the whole," he said, half in reply to his sister's question.

Outdoors he did what pleased Mrs. Tew beyond measure.

"I understand," said Professor Hare, when she had explained the details again, showing him just where the tablet was to be affixed. "It really will be handsome, I think. I don't mind its going up at all, Polly. But I *do* ask you to arrange for no heavy bolts or—or clamp-things. I really could n't have any boring through

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the wall. Is that fair? Just light screws, please."

"Certainly. You shall see. Thank you very much, Winthrop."

The professor hesitated a moment. "Let me be quite fair, Polly. I don't very much want the tablet, for a dozen reasons. But it seems very ungracious to refuse, does n't it?"

Mrs. Tew looked away.

"Of course it does. So I say go ahead. The Society," said Professor Hare, backing toward the door, "has my full permission to erect the tablet. And bless it! Good-by, Polly."

Once more in his library, the professor watched till he saw his sister's victoria roll out of sight, then he took out from his pocket the letter he had put there, and fell to re-perusing it. And as he read, he laughed to himself.

"It may possibly turn out to be fortunate," remarked Professor Hare to the Tanagra statuette on top of the book-shelves, "that my sister did n't see what was written here. Two and two is not a difficult addition." He went to the window to make quite sure the victoria was not returning, and looking out, received the bows of two students who at that moment were mounting the brick walk to his front door. "Also," he continued, "it 's as well she got away before this

particular pair of delinquents appeared. Things come out very nicely sometimes."

Usually he meted out his dean's justice in the little office near the campus, which always smelled of cocoa-matting and wet storm-clothes, at regular morning hours; but in special cases he preferred to examine and sentence or acquit in his own house. It was easier to think there.

So these two boys, had they been seen by their friends, would have been set down as about to receive at the acting dean's hands some attention closer than the ordinary; and that their cases were indeed particular the president himself had indicated in the letter Professor Hare thought lucky that his sister did not see.

"Now here is the real point of the matter, speaking practically," said Professor Hare.

He had talked as to any pair of gentlemen of his acquaintance on some matter of differing opinion. The dean's recommendation amounts to final judgment. If he chooses, he can have any penalty inflicted, including the greatest, which is expulsion. But Dean McHugh, and, like him, Professor Hare, had better ways with boys than merely to enforce conventional penalties.

He sat back in his chair and joined delicately the tips of his long, slim fingers, his eyes on his

guests only when they did not know it. Insensibly too, the boys sat back from the edges of their chairs an inch at a time; and, though each felt a vague surprise not unmixed with some alarm when he discovered that he was cushioned and comfortable with knees across, neither went back to a seat and a heart-feeling like a docked malefactor's. No, the three discussed the relation of Town to Gown, that was all.

"Here's the point, in three words," repeated the professor, extinguishing his match. "You want to do well by the university, don't you? You like to think of yourselves as good Dale men? Your father was one, and is still, Anderson. He was in '66. You don't want to have him doubt your loyalty, I'm sure."

"I guess not, sir. And I *am* a good Dale man."

"Of course you are." Professor Hare beamed. "But you can be a great deal better one."

The boy's eyes grew stony. "I don't think I understand, sir," he replied. He failed entirely to speak steadily.

"Don't steal any more street or shop signs, Anderson; that's how."

The youngster hesitated, darted a measuring look at the master, then smiled down at the design in the rug. "My father—"

The professor said something inarticulate.

"He used to steal 'em, sir." The smile grew into a laugh as the boy looked up. And he added hardly enough, "He has one still, sir."

"No. Really?" The great man laughed too, remembering something in a rush. The boy winked swiftly at his companion, who still remained rigid and expectant. "But now see here. What about the good citizen who owned that sign, lad?"

"Why—"

"Eh? Well, first of all it cost something to replace it." The professor was talking very quietly now, the smile no longer in his eyes. He made a little gesture at the end of each sentence. "And, secondly, that shopkeeper treasured for years something like a hatred for the boy who robbed him. Thirdly,—and this is important, lad,—he never after was likely to have a single word for the university and its students which was n't sprung from mistrust and dislike." The professor looked from one to the other till their eyes lowered. "Do you think your father played the part of a good Dale man then?—in that bit of nonsense?"

The conversational tone came back a minute later.

"The students don't realize how much loss for

the university comes from the gain of a painted shingle, boys."

"No, sir. I suppose not."

The fire sprang up again. "And it's high time they *did* realize it. You undo in ten minutes what sensible men have worked over for months, sometimes. And it's to stop. Now. You're on probation till June, Anderson; and you too, Allen. That'll do. I won't detain you any longer."

The visitors rose and groped for their hats, getting unaccountably in each other's way as they made for the door. Suddenly the professor stopped them by a word, and they faced about. And then he said something more, and they replied with something they could n't remember afterward; but, at any rate, it was n't a minute before they were seated again, talking—they knew not why—about the Society of Revolutionary Gentlewomen.

"They put up tablets and things, don't they?" asked Allen, speaking for the first time.

"They do. Yes. As memorials, you know, of the great events in our early history, and as a means of marking the sites or the identity of buildings of historical interest." Mrs. Tew never guessed how perfectly her brother had learned the words she quoted to him out of her Society's

charter. Perhaps she underestimated, however, the power of repetition. "They 're going to put up one here next week," the professor added.

The boys looked as interested as could be.

"Yes." He answered imagined questions. "Out in front. Only a small affair, for my old house is n't so *very* famous, you see."

A deprecatory murmur from the audience.

"They put it on with screws," Professor Hare went on, his old man's love of elaborate detail cropping out, as the boys could see—a little weakness politely to be humored. "Its dimensions are twelve inches by fifteen,—not large, you see,—with a screw in each corner. I did n't allow anything more elaborate," he added, a bit fretfully. He looked at them as though slyly seeking sympathy. "I—I don't *like* advertisement very much, to tell the truth."

They only listened respectfully. The old man watched eagerly their eyes, their attitudes, their color, and found all leaden. Of course it was the sentence he had passed on them which filled their honest heads to the exclusion of everything else. "Let us have a little cheeriness, a bit of sun through the cloud," quoth the professor inwardly; "and perhaps other things may have a chance." He broke off his discourse and fell into

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a silence, his slim hand caressing the silky beard. Then he turned to them again.

"Did you ever do any sign-stealing before this last attempt, boys?"

They came awake again. "No, sir."

"This was the first time?"

"Yes, sir. My word, professor."

He smiled at the dear school-phrase coming to the surface. "Of course you deserve a good round penalty, first for stealing, and secondly for being so silly as to get caught by a policeman. The New York papers made pleasant reading this morning, boys. Pleasant for your fathers and mothers, eh? Pleasant for us, who have worked and worked to bring the town and the university together, who are liable to boast about the type of man Dale turns out. You've made quite a name for yourselves, youngsters. Are you satisfied?"

"I won't do it again, sir. Promise."

"No, sir. I won't. Really."

He broke in on their protests. This was not what he wanted. He was very unskilful. "Don't promise! Don't promise! You can't tell at all what might happen; and you'd be sorry to break your word."

They thanked him confusedly. They were still in a maze. They almost wished the real

dean was interviewing them. He would give them twenty marks and say no more.

"Think a little, that's all; count a hundred, just as you do when you're tempted to get angry. Reckon up the cost, boys, to yourselves and to the university. And if you think it *pays*," the professor said, raising his delicate voice ever so slightly, "steal every sign in the city of Old-port."

Then Anderson glanced up quickly; a flicker of laughter crossed his face. He started in turn a search of his master's expression, and thought he made a great discovery. And he wore a kind of Robin Hood look—all daring, all merry—for five full minutes afterward.

A rap on the door made them break off their talk—which was growing again toward those events and tendencies in their common life that are so dear to discuss between older and younger college men. It was two gentlemen, the maid explained, come to see Professor Hare about placing some tablet, she thought.

"I'm very busy, Hannah," he said hastily. "No, I must see them, I'm afraid. Ask them in, please."

The boys stood up, quite at ease now, Anderson seeming to think he was sharing a funny secret with his senior.

"We must n't keep you, sir. You 'll want to talk about the tablet."

"Yes?" The professor pursed up his lips. "You 're as impudent as you are inexpert in thievery, young man; and I like you both very much. But you 're on probation, remember."

He followed them to the door, and greeted the two men who were just coming across the wide hall.

"And don't forget to count a full hundred, if you 're planning to do anything silly or—or risky."

"Yes, sir. I think," said Anderson, bold and shy at once,— "I think we 'll count at least that much."

In two weeks' time Barbara came to hate her Aunt Tew sincerely, because on each day of the fortnight some member of the Society's committee, or somebody from the firm that was casting the tablet,— most often Mrs. Tew herself,—came with plans and directions to be talked over with the professor. He chafed under the treatment; Barbara's sympathy availed nothing at all after the first. He picked up the morning paper fearfully, and regularly threw it down with strange Eastern oaths; or else, in an ecstasy of plaintive rage, would point out for Barbara's reading some new notice about his house's history, some ten lines

of editorial congratulating the Society on its good work, Old port on its good fortune. He found himself in the "social notes"; he discovered his photograph reproduced in a New York Sunday edition.

There was an hour of real suffering to endure when the boss workman set his bit into the clapboards to make the screw-holes; he abandoned the house entirely on the day the stand was being erected from which the honorable senator was to deliver his speech.

"I cannot endure it, my dear," said the professor. "It is exactly as though I heard them hammering up my gallows."

"You won't be home for lunch, then?"

"No. Good-by."

And off he went with his hat over his eyes. He hurried so that he failed entirely to see two students who touched their hats as he passed them just outside the gate and fell into laughter after the old man was by.

"I wish the tablet was in the sea!" cried Barbara, hotly, inside the house.

"It 'll be a cinch," whispered Anderson, passing along, with his eye on the preparations the workmen were making.

"They 'll expel us sure if we get caught," his companion replied doubtfully. "It 's too much risk, Bill."

The other swore light-heartedly. "It 'll give us the biggest pull with old Denny that ever happened. And we ain't going to get caught."

All day long the carpenters pottered about their task, while Michael, the furnace-and-lawn man, arranged coverings and barriers above and around the shrubbery where the morrow's crowd was expected to press densest. And all day the clouds sagged lower and lower in the sky as well as in the spirits of the Hare household. Toward night, just after the five-o'clock whistles called the workmen away, a dismal rain set in, type of sorrow and tears, as Barbara remarked.

"You should read Ruskin again," replied her grandfather. "He would tell you that, as a matter of fact, there 's nothing sorrowful at all about a rain-storm — this one in particular. Come away from the window, Babbie. And pull the shade down tight."

She lingered a moment, however, peering out into the street. Just beside the window flapped the sodden flags which covered the tablet; the raw pine planking of the platform was just beneath it. It was so dark she could hardly see beyond the dooryard, and the driving wet made the night darker still.

"There 's somebody standing just by the gate," said Barbara.

"So?" the professor inquired. "Come in, Babbie, please."

"It's the policeman. That's all. I can see his badge flash when it catches the light from the window."

"What? A policeman?" The old man let his book fall to the floor, where it sprawled open and rumpled, but quite unnoticed. "It is n't possible!"

If there had not been a kind of laughter mingled with the other expression on her grandfather's face, Barbara would have been well frightened at him. He sprang up with the start of one who is afraid, and then stood irresolute, seeming partly in high anger, partly in real alarm.

"A policeman!" he exclaimed again.

She laughed out at his dismay. "Are you afraid of him, grandfather? Let us flee through the garden to yonder postern, and so escape—"

"No, no," he broke in. "It's quite serious. That is—"

She wondered more and more.

"I think I'd like a talk with that policeman," the professor said. "No, I'm not crazy a bit. Get me my cape, Barbara. I'll hail him from the porch."

At a little distance up the street two men were

plowing along, head down, hands deep in their pockets. They wore gray felt hats and coachmen's white rubber coats, so that if they moved very quietly one might guess that against a white wall, like that of the Hare house, they would be nearly invisible.

The two came along slowly, passed the professor's door, encountered the patrolman standing at the gate, were conscious of his eyes following them as they kept on down the street.

"They 've set a guard, by Jove!" exclaimed Anderson. "Perhaps he 's only stopping for a minute, though."

"Don't look around yet. Wait till you get in the shadow. Now."

They halted at some little distance, directly under one of the street lights, so standing in comparative darkness while all around them was bright. The black blot of the officer's figure remained motionless at the Hares' gate.

"Is n't that the devil and all! The beast 's regularly posted, Bill."

"The old man ought to see him once."

A path of ruddy light suddenly blazed from the professor's door. The policeman's wet rubber coat gleamed, for he turned quickly as though somebody called to him from the house. The watchers held their breath.

For a few seconds the policeman held parley at the door, then returned to his post, the door standing open the while. He looked east and west along the empty street; then, seeing nothing, for the two boys stood perfectly still, bore up swiftly to the house again, and the door slammed behind him.

"Leave your coat," the professor directed.
"Take Officer Brady's helmet and club, Hannah."

"I can't stay, sorr."

"You're not going to. Only a minute or two. Be comfortable whenever you can, Brady."

"True *for ye*, sorr. 'T is what the soldiers'll tell ye. Thankee, sorr."

Struck silent with amazement, Barbara watched the scene from her place with wide eyes. She thought she was proof against any surprise at what her grandfather chose to do or to say, for there was a quaint freakiness in his blood that set him at larks like any school-boy, and made him invent the most splendid fictions; but this entertainment of honest Brady was a point beyond what she could imagine possible. She sympathized with Hannah, whose lip curled as she received the officer's dripping head-gear and heavy weapon.

"You policemen have a pretty hard life," the professor said. "I often wonder that you care

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to take it up. A night like this, or the streets in August, or the time there — when was it, last April?"

"The strike at Stafford's, ye mane, sorr?"

"Yes. Pretty rough, eh?"

"'T was that, sorr. I was there."

"So?"

"Yes, sorr. Thim Dagoes—"

The professor glanced up. "That's right, Hannah. Bring it in. You'll have a cup of coffee, Brady?"

"Thankee, sorr. Saving your prisence, miss."

Barbara smiled rather faintly. She tried to understand her grandfather's furtive winks and nods at her, and at a venture asked the guest some idle questions of her own. The professor nodded approvingly, so she persevered, until soon the good man was making gestures in the heat of his story about this riot or that fire, which was Hell let loose, begging the young lady's pardon. She listened away, amused a little in spite of herself. It had been a rather silly half-hour, and the evening had not promised to be very cheerful.

"That wretched tablet!" she exclaimed to herself, thinking of the past two weeks. And suddenly, with her mind bent on the offending bit of bronze, Barbara seemed to hear very light

footsteps on the platform outside the window. She leaned forward instinctively and took hold of the curtain-cord.

"Barbara!" cried the professor, breaking in on Officer Brady's discourse.

"Yes, grandfather."

"Will you get my clipping-book?" She had still her hand on the cord. "Now, please."

"I thought I heard a noise outside, grandfather."

The policeman looked about him wildly. "Where's me helmet, professor?"

"There!" Barbara exclaimed, though her grandfather gestured madly behind Brady's back. "Don't you hear it?"

Brady whirled about to ask again for the plunder Hannah carried off. He mentioned the probability of the sergeant's going his rounds. Barbara's nerves, stretched taut, made her afraid to raise the curtain, although she asked to send and find what there was outside. Her voice rose higher than usual.

But as they turned to the old man for his answer,—for his permission for every act seemed always necessary if you were by him,—he looked at the flustered Brady not at all, and a little sternly at his granddaughter.

"I asked for my clipping-book, my dear."

Barbara rose swiftly, for his voice had lost its suavity. "You 'll find it over there, to the right of the hall door."

"That noise outside, sorr!" Brady explained. His brow was puckered deep. "I sh'd look at ut, sorr."

The professor raised his brows. "I hear nothing." He motioned imperiously to the chair the patrolman had quitted. "I wish to finish my story, Brady."

From outside came with perfect clearness sounds which rain and wind could never make, nor was it the blinds' rattle nor the trees' creak. It would not have been hard to swear that one heard something like low and hurried talk, then the crack of a board as under a heavy weight let fall. But there was always an errand for Barbara which took her away from the window, or a quick question she must answer when the professor saw her edging toward the door. And for honest Brady there were hot coffee and a willing audience for any tales he chose to tell. Best of all, it was the old man himself who took him from his post, and he was known to be high in any city matters, as those, for instance, which came to the police commissioners. Until, all at once, the noises outside ceased, there was nothing to do but listen and reply as the old monarch

wished. He was hard to meet if a certain mood was on him.

And Barbara was a little indignant, though she saw some meaning in the secret signs her grandfather made her from time to time.

They sent Brady into the storm again just before the sergeant was really due, joyful with the thimble of Benedictine that burned cheerily next his heart, blind with the bright light from the house.

The professor leaned over the porch railing to look at the new platform. He laughed and laughed when he came back into the house.

"Now," Barbara exclaimed, "perhaps, sir, you 'll explain your extraordinary doings."

Professor Hare wiped his eyes. "What an hour! What an hour!"

"I should think as much. Tell me, *please*."

"You were the young person who was so eager to raise the curtain. *Now* look out, if you like,—you that heard the heavy footsteps on the platform."

She turned with a laugh and a question dancing in her eyes.

"I don't know, darling. Come and kiss me."

"Poor Aunt Tew! I wonder if they really *did*."

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" laughed the old man.
"Think of the Senator's speech, dear!"

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The exercises were announced to begin at eleven o'clock, but preparations were under way long before.

By half-past seven Michael was hard at work sweeping the platform and the walks, directed by the professor, though Michael thought his minute directions rather unnecessary. The sun came out and dried things nicely; even the bunting, which hung limp and gray over the tablet, took on some shape by nine o'clock, and showed bravely enough its gay national colors, the blue and buff of the Society's banner. Michael was for rearranging the flags, for the storm had made one or two of the carefully draped folds hang somewhat awry; he was even laying his hands on them, mounting nimbly a chair, when Professor Hare forbade him.

"It 'll do very well, Michael. There 's plenty of other things for you to attend to. Has the matting come?"

"Yes, sir."

"Get that down, then; for the chairs ought to be here by ten."

Mrs. Tew drove up at half-past ten, ready, she said, to help with any work that was needed; but found that her brother had been before her with everything. She clapped her hands cautiously, for her gloves strained at their buttons.

"It 's all very nice, indeed," said Mrs. Tew.

The sky was cloudless, the trees had stopped their dripping. Under foot were spread strips of cocoa-matting which covered entirely the rawness of the planks, while the walks and porch were as bare and dry as in August. In two rows to right and left of the tablet were arranged the folding-chairs which the undertaker's wagon had deposited. The flags shook in the breeze.

"It lacks only a glass of water on a table for the orator," Professor Hare remarked, as he viewed the scene.

"I don't think that 's necessary," his sister answered seriously. "You must n't trouble."

"I wish it complete," said the professor, tugging at his beard.

"It 's *very* nice, indeed. Ah, here 's the Senator."

"I wonder—oh, I wonder if those young men were to be depended on. Barbara, it shall be your task to keep every soul away from those slightly disarranged but still wonder-veiling flags. Discovery, if there 's going to be such a thing, would be very dreary indeed." This in a swift undertone as the professor waited on the porch for the approach of the orator of the day. The latter shook off a couple of reporters at the gate, and advanced slowly, Mrs. Tew and the

other ladies of the committee close around him.

"You have a fine old house, Dr. Hare," the Senator remarked, as he stood in the library. The professor had suggested that it was a pity not to employ the few minutes until eleven o'clock. "Ah, these family traditions!"

"Here is another," replied the professor, returning from a locked cupboard.

The Senator smiled, and set the bottle down.

"My father's," explained Dr. Hare. "It is gold and honey and fire. Henry Clay sent it to him in '44."

There arose a little flutter of applause from the ladies on the platform as the two gentlemen came outdoors again, and this was taken up with interest by the crowd, which overflowed from the sidewalk into the garden and extended back to the car-tracks. The ladies took their places on the undertaker's chairs, the delicate badges on their bosoms glinting in the sunlight. Gorman, the coachman, wearing his best livery and gloves which rivaled the white of his leathers, took his place at the cord which was to twitch aside the flags at the proper moment. Dr. Hare stood back, tugging at his beard. In the crowd he caught sight of two students who listened with all gravity while the president of the Society

explained the meaning and the object of the coming ceremony.

It was a pretty and very pleasant scene.

In the middle of the president's address, Gorman, standing close against the wall, was seen to glance up and then to grow very red in the face. He looked again when the flags stirred a little in the breeze, then left his post to go toward his master. Dr. Hare fell into earnest talk with the clergyman beside him. Gorman bit his lip and looked about him desperately. The president wondered why her audience no longer paid her close attention.

"Gorman!" whispered Mrs. Tew, fiercely, as the man edged between her and the wall.

"Yes, madam?"

"What is it? Go back to your place."

"That there tablet, madam!"

"Go back! Don't you see you're making a disturbance? Tell me afterward."

"Very good, madam." And he retreated, redder than ever. The president recovered her assurance.

They applauded her loyally, the ladies telling each other that Miss Colston was really very clever at such things; and they applauded again when the Senator stepped from his place to be introduced. Best of all, the crowd kept absolute silence when he began to speak.

He was signally honored, said the Senator; he was unable to do his splendid task full justice. Not a citizen of Oldport, not a citizen of this great land of ours, but knew by heart the story this beautiful tablet commemorated. The names of the actors in that historic scene were household words; the result of their deliberations helped to mold the destinies of a great people through a struggle the courage of which was equaled only by its single-hearted sincerity, its place in the world's history only by its record of truth to a chosen cause.

"But the story of heroes, the counsels of sages, cannot be told too often," the Senator went on, turning to his notes.

"The best type of simple, fervid public oratory," whispered the clergyman to Dr. Hare. "A good speaker."

"Oh, very," the other answered. "Presents such a new aspect of familiar—"

"Listen. Think of its happening right here where we are sitting!"

The professor leaned forward as if to hear better, caught Gorman's eye, and answered his appealing, desperate look with a stare which made the man bite his lip.

The Senator crumpled his slip of notes into his hand. "Such, ladies and gentlemen, was the

story this Society has been led—nay, inspired—to fittingly commemorate. It was a tale of sacrifices bravely made, of stern duty faced unflinchingly. It was a tale that has been told a score of times, whenever the American race has taken its stand on the eternal question between hard right and easier wrong, between the brave part and the coward's part. And I, for one, am glad that there are noble women of the old Yankee stock who feel it their duty and their pleasure to keep alive the memory of such deeds and resolutions. We thank you, ladies of the Society, from our hearts."

He turned to Gorman, who stiffened to stone.
"Ready?" he whispered.

"God help me, I am!" replied the coachman, swiftly, half aloud, then turned his back on the assembly.

"Pull!" cried the Senator. He raised his hat.
"To the memory of six American patriots!"

The crowd was perfectly still, watching with lively interest. Those who stood on the outskirts made little jumps into the air to see better; those nearer the platform pressed closer still; the ladies stood up. A little shiver of applause ran through the audience when first the twined flags shook as Gorman twitched the silk cords, and this grew into a cheer and the musketry of hand-clapping, loud enough to bring people on a run

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from down the street, as the bunting was seen to give and then slowly flutter down.

A sudden silence, ten seconds long, followed. Then rose such a roar of whole-hearted laughter as the quiet street had never heard before.

The Senator, scarlet in the face, pounded for order; the president needed the care of two other ladies at once; the whole platformful rose in a vague indignation, but the rest of the crowd stood still and yelled with delight. Only a portly Irishwoman, who carried a newspaper bundle, echoed the sentiment of the Society. She, good soul, turned away to remark :

“ ‘T is like whin Mr. Bryan thried to make his speech. Thank God, thim fellies don’t ripresint the dacint people of Oldport.”

When the flags came away there was revealed a square of dark-blue bunting fastened where the tablet should have been, and from it in big white letters leered the inscription :

DALE

1903

There remained only a very general and indistinct impression of what followed. Dr. Hare remembered that there were tears; that he administered cordials to a beautiful stranger in his

library; that the Senator went to luncheon with Mrs. Tew instead of staying with him as had been arranged; that laughter hung about the house for a half-hour after the crowd began to break up. He remembered to have made Officer Brady some kind of promise, in the darkness under the stairs, and wondered afterward how that worthy had broken his way into the house; he was sure that he saw Anderson and Allen sitting on his fence, all radiant with smiles. Finally, he found that he was alone with Barbara, and that she was nearly hysterical with laughing.

Dr. Hare sighed deeply, then extended his hand across the table. Hannah had gone out with the plates.

“My dear?”

“Yes, Dr. Hare.”

“Let us shake hands.” He spoke very solemnly. “It may be for the last time.”

“You will fly?”

“I must. I’ve no future but a dungeon cell here in Oldport. Didst remark thine Aunt Tew?”

“If you are caught,” the girl said, “let us hope that Officer Brady will be your keeper. He, sir, is an honest man, and—and helped a worthy cause worthily.”

She collapsed again, and Hannah found them

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weak and silly with laughing when she brought in the salad.

Later in the day the professor sat down to write three letters. Outside he could hear the undertaker's chairs being stacked together and carried into the black wagon which stood at the curb. For a moment he thought of sending out the two flags and the piece of blue college bunting that lay neatly rolled together on his big desk.

"No, I won't," he said. "They would n't give them a proper enough burial. Undertakers lack sentiment."

Then he squared himself to his writing. Two of the letters were duplicates of each other, and read as follows :

"I have the pleasure to inform you that your period of probation is terminated."

The other was addressed to the Secretary of the University. It was a little longer than the others, but, like them, written on the official paper of the dean's office. It ran :

"I desire you to lay before the President and Academic Faculty my resignation of the position of Acting Dean. I find that the pressure of

other college duties prevents me from giving to the conduct of the office that complete attention which its high importance demands. Pray express to the President my deep appreciation of the honor conferred in being allowed to occupy for a time the position which Professor McHugh fills so splendidly."

He showed the note to Barbara and waited for her verdict.

"Won't they think it rather queer?" she asked, with her brow puckered.

"The students?"

"No, no. The Faculty. There'll be a kind of investigation about—to-day, won't there?"

"Possibly." He took the notes back and sealed them up. "But we must n't be in a place where it might be hard not to play false by our allies and friends, Babbie."

The morning's laughter echoed again among the sober books around the walls.

"Our allies and friends!" Barbara repeated. "That makes me think of Paul, who, sir, still awaits conversion."

"He's quite worth while, that boy. Ask him to dinner right away, Babbie."

She laughed again. "'Will you walk into my parlor?' Hold him fast, grandfather."

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“I ’ll need your help, fellow-conspirator.”

“Of course I ’ll help,” she cried eagerly. “Paul ’s just the kind of man that Dale needs,” she added.

“True girl!” laughed the old man. “College bred to her marrow.”

“Who ’d be anything else ?” she asked, proud as though she wore the purple.

II

THE OPENING OF COLLEGE

DIFFERING from the rest of this part of the world, it is not unfair to say Oldport counts only two seasons in the year. Outwardly, it is true, the city conforms to the habits of its neighbors: the grass and trees greening, the harbor freezing at the same time with any other town up and down the Sound. But live there awhile, and you will perceive that Oldport folks act and, more important, think according to a calendar quite different from that which decides the movements and impulses of the people east and west of them.

The city reckons as one season the months from October to July, and the other hundred days make up a second part of their year's tale.

The reason of this singularity is not far to seek. For generations Oldport has had in its midst, crowning its highest hill, what has grown from a famous New England college to a great

university. And because for generations Oldport has been looking to the college as a means of livelihood, its main source of greatness, the citizens regulate their times not by the first robin's song or the earliest frost, but by the beginning and end of term-time and vacation.

In Oldport's calendar the two dates most important are the last Thursday of September and the last Wednesday of June. From the first begins the city's waking time. From then on its name heads telegraphed columns in the papers every day. For nine months great things are done. Masters and doctors come thither from Oxford and Paris and Leipsic. From the quiet old place go out opinions, doctrines, policies, which high and low discuss heatedly. There are pageants, there are contests, much laughter, not a few tears. There are deeds accomplished. Three thousand young lives are helped to their blooming; a score of old lives linger in the beauty of full fruitage. Then comes Commencement, and what happens to Oldport after its heart stops beating I do not know. I think that deeper than its neighbors the city sinks under the weight of the Summer's drowsiness. I think it must lie like a still lake under the sun, expressionless till the vigor of the Autumn north wind ruffle it into life again.

It is curious to note the suddenness of the change from one season to the other, from the dullness of the hundred days to the activity of term-time. On Tuesday the streets are crowded, which on Saturday were as quiet as in July.

First appear the announcements of rooms to rent in the dingy old boarding-places and flimsy-looking apartment-houses lining the dull streets that bound the straggling groups of university buildings, and the negro servants in their blue checked jumpers begin their languid rug- and carpet-beating on the grass plots around the regular dormitories. Next the department stores trick out their vast show-windows, presumably like college rooms, full of lounging-chairs, text-books, and prints from the work of the most recently popular illustrator, inhabited by anemic wax figures clad in civilian clothes or speckless foot-ball armor. Then come the groups of second- or third-year undergraduates, their tan still dark, their step so different from the swift and furtive scuttle of the freshmen; then towering truck-loads of baggage. The city stirs, opens her arms, and perceives all at once that her heart is alive again. She begins to tell her hours once more by the clangorous chimes of the college chapel instead of heeding the clock on the tower of the city hall.

For Mrs. Sadler the changing seasons were marked by the closing and opening of the old house next hers. The hunger in a desert place which her life in Summer most resembled, when the blinds next door were closed and wired, and the phlox in the garden went uncut, was always succeeded by a time of peace and plenty, dating from the day that Professor Hare and beautiful Miss Barbara came home again from their vacation. And the old Hare house became in course of time not only desirable as regarded her comfort, but absolutely essential to her happiness. To be supplied with queer jellies and pairs of partridges was delightful, but more pleasant to an old woman living alone was the ability to see from behind her curtains directly into a study lined with books and a dining-room set out with century-old mahogany and silver, to observe from her tiny porch the comings and goings of various great men to and from the Hares' door, and, equally interesting, the doings of Miss Barbara.

It was about a week after the affair of the tablet, a Friday night, summer-like, though October was half gone. Mrs. Sadler had seen the Hares come into the dining-room, where the candle-light was soft over the table; with them a man. That the latter was young and tall, Mrs.

Sadler could see; that he was very handsome seemed to her probable, because in such a case desirable. Then Hannah stupidly pulled down the shades, so that the old lady could see no longer. She had to bide her time till, as she had hoped, the warmth of the evening called the little party outdoors to the low chairs on the porch before the house. Then Mrs. Sadler, her air of disinterestedness fine to see, took up a position on her own door-step, whence she could view and comment at leisure upon all that went on across the low picket fence.

By slow degrees the old woman had come to love her neighbors, though she took precious good care never to let them guess it. For all they knew, Mrs. Sadler thought of them not at all beyond the time she was mechanically thanking them for some little gift, or was hinting to Hannah that her coal was short and prices ruinous for a soldier's widow. But just as hardly anything transpired Mrs. Sadler did not see or hear of; so there was nothing a bit out of the common of which she had not come to reckon every possibility for good or evil to the great Master and his young ward. It was her keenest pleasure to follow each detail of the life in the old white house. At first she had stared out of curiosity and because she was old and alone; but

later Mrs. Sadler followed the Hares' doings with a feeling as near affection as with her was possible.

Very sweet it was—and all Oldport were one with Mrs. Sadler here—to mark how closely the lives of the professor and Barbara were interwoven. She had come to him ever so long ago. People had forgotten just how; there was only a vague remembrance of the son, of the flashing beauty of the young bride Oldport had laughed and cried over for a season. Only the old gossips could recall the story of the fever scourge and the dreadful burial in the far-away southern island. Oldport had seen only the latter part of the romance, and had found the unfolding of it very lovely. There were the years when the great professor was at the beck and call of the child; then the years—this a brief interval—when she was away at the famous school; now the summers together in Paris, or Russia, or Canada; the days at home, when the two walked together.

They had never been apart. Their thoughts were each other's, and their hopes. There were no fears to share.

"It's certainly unusual," Mrs. Sadler remarked to the gray cat in her lap. "And I must say I do like to see it. Dear me!" She winced a little at the remembrance which flashed once

more across her mind — that of a young man who swayed where he stood on her door-step, demanding money of his widowed mother. The boy she had not seen these ten years. "I do hope they 'll keep right on, bless 'em!"

Then Mrs. Sadler broke off her train of reminiscence to watch and listen. She was very thankful that her daily entertainment had begun again. She bent her attention to discover who the young man was that had come to dinner.

That he seemed quite to center the interest of the little group was apparent, and, so far as could be judged, he was receiving a great deal of advice. The professor spoke as he did when Mrs. Sadler had heard him lecture.

"I am a bit selfish, I think, Gardiner," he was saying. "If it were anybody but you, I don't know that I would be so strong in my urging you to this. But I want you, my boy. I want to see more youngsters like you in the Graduate School. Most of us here in America have to grub so hard for our daily bread that we have n't time and we have n't the means to do what we 'd like. But a man such as you —"

"You rate me too high, Dr. Hare."

"Not a bit. You 'll do — with a lot of training." This with a laugh. "I want to see the

old place turn out one more of the leisurely, quiet, well-equipped scholar-gentlemen. I 've seen so many pedagogues I 'm tired of them."

"If I thought I could ever grow to be like you, sir—"

Both the others laughed aloud at that; and Gardiner blushed hotly before he recovered himself to add : "I mean it, sir, really. Don't laugh, Babbie."

The girl nodded at him. "You 're very presumptuous, young man. Understand, sir, that the chances are against your growing *ever* to be like Professor Hare. He, sir, is one of the world's greatest scholars."

She laughed again when she had finished her little speech; her voice danced through it; but one might guess at something like sincerity under its gaiety. She took her grandfather's little caress as though it were a blessing—as reverently as happily.

"Don't decide too hastily, lad," the professor went on. "I have ever so much more to tell you. I 'll have to let Barbara enlighten you now for a while. And she can tell you as much about the real life here, which you 've never seen, as I can myself."

He got up from his low chair. Mrs. Sadler noticed that big as Professor Hare was, the young

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man topped him. "Friday night. They 'll be waiting for me up yonder."

"Why don't you take Paul along?" Barbara asked. "It 's the Language Club. It 's quite worth while," she added, turning to Gardiner.

The latter hesitated. "I 'd like to go very much, sir. But—"

"Well?"

"I 'm wearing rather funny clothes for a Language Club." Inspiration came to him just in time.

"So you are. That 's just why I did n't change. It would look rather — queer, Babbie," said the professor. "Next time, Gardiner."

"Thank you, sir."

Barbara looked at him rather oddly, apparently about to tax him with something. But Gardiner's face was perfectly blank. She kissed the old man as he came out of the house with his hat. "Come back soon, dearest."

"All right. Good night, Gardiner. I 'm very glad you came in. I—I must hurry a little, I 'm afraid."

The year past had seen much come and go over Paul Gardiner's young head. He had finished half of the last part of his stay at college like any of his mates, distinguished only as the man his admirers said might accomplish nearly anything he

tried for. Save for this, he lived the usual life, drinking more or less, reading a good deal and remembering most of it, holding a scholarship record not so high but what the Dean scolded him now and then for idleness, unattracted by any vice because he hated its ugliness, thinking, aspiring somewhat vaguely.

Then on a day in February the messenger boy handed him the telegram which told of his father's death; and there followed the month at home in the dark house with his mother. He was to take the place of the other, she told Paul, clinging to him. She seemed to him very slight and small. There were plans laid, letters written. There must be something arranged for, a training in the ways of those who handle great estates. Two months passed, the first of a life really begun, and then, with the coming of the Spring, Paul found that he was entirely alone.

The physicians could do nothing, they said. She had wanted to join her husband. The boy mourned bitterly,—as much, perhaps, because his mother cared less for life with him than for life in shadowland, where his father might be waiting as he did for the loss of his world's dearest.

They told him he was very rich. It was all his: the docketed securities, the house on the

avenue, and the great farm — his grandfather's — lying up among the Ashley hills.

He went through the end of his course, seeing nothing. A year before, six months before, he would have cheered the nine and sung at the fence; he would have raced his dory or skipped down to New York over a Sunday like any other of his mates. But now it was the life after Commencement he thought of, the days and the years so different, he told himself sternly, from the present. He began to haunt older men, and his mates were troubled at the change in him, telling themselves he was sorrying too much.

Commencement drove him away from Oldport ; then Europe swallowed him up for a while. And because it happened that two important conversations took place, Paul came back from Paris to Ashley, then to Oldport, and — here the immediate result — to a seat close beside Barbara Hare.

The professor gone, a little silence came down. They were old friends, these two, Mrs. Sadler guessed, because they did not find it necessary to talk very much. Paul sighed deeply, looking far away. His face grew very serious. The girl in the big chair spoke first.

“ Always the same ! ” exclaimed Barbara, fol-

lowing the young man's gaze. "Oldport 's very dear, I think. Just look, Paul."

From the opposite side of the street began a wide, park-like sweep, shadowy elms high above it. Along its western boundary stretched some college buildings, a dim range of Gothic, with a great tower, high-pinnacled, centering a lovely sky-line. An archway pierced the base of this tower, and through it shone a bit of palest west.

It all connoted much which, if indefinable, was sensibly beautiful. To the south, across the grassy park, ran a main street, at that hour not seen, only apprehended as a place full of bright light and faint noise. From the dooryard just before them arose the scent of box and the delicacy of belated verbena.

"Oh, yes. Oldport does n't change much," the young man answered rather listlessly. He recalled his look from the quiet view across the park. "Tell me about your trip after I left, Babbie."

"The trip? Oh, nothing at all. We came home almost at once, you know. And the steamer was *so* crowded."

"They always are in September. You came on the *Lucania*, did n't you?"

"No. We could n't get passage. We came on the old *Lahn*. Goodness, how she rolled!"

The talk dwindled still lower, fed on light stuff which flared only to die a moment later. It was very dull indeed, Mrs. Sadler thought, and contemplated giving up her vigil. But it seemed to the good lady impossible, somehow, that Miss Barbara could talk that way a whole evening long unless the young man was wholly a fool; and that could not be, for fools never came to the Hares' for dinner.

She decided to wait a few minutes longer, hoping greatly, especially desirous of finding out just who the young man was, and what he did on that door-step. And after a while Mrs. Sadler's hopes were realized. She discovered as many things as she could remember. And the beginning of her happiness, oddly enough, sprang from the close of the conversation she found so uninteresting.

The two kept on their aimless talk about the things in Europe which interest nobody any more, until they had worked around to Paris and its hotels. And then, all of a sudden, Paul remarked :

“ That 's a splendid little place you stay at.”

She laughed. “ I 'm glad you liked it.”

(“ They were together, then,” said Mrs. Sadler.)

“ It 's a vast improvement on the glories across the river, we think.”

"From which you saved me. Do you remember how I met you?"

She glanced up quickly. "In Paris, do you mean?"

"Of course. That was the most important meeting of the many."

His look challenged her, and for a second she might have intended answering as he might have wished. But she replied only as she might have been expected to. "We were out in the Bois, were n't we? And you had somebody with you."

"John Hilton. What a *very* nice time you and the professor gave me! I was desperately lonely and stupid all by myself. I can't thank you enough."

"Nonsense! We did have a good time, did n't we?" She waited a minute, while Mrs. Sadler tried to imagine what having a good time in Paris might mean; then spoke again, this time in a tone quite different. And one who had listened to the talk might guess that here was what Barbara had been waiting to ask for a half-hour. "And—and you 're glad to be back, Paul?"

The young man did not answer at once. He was noting the poise of her head and the line of her delicate profile. He spoke only when she

turned quickly, as though a little surprised at his silence.

"It all depends," Paul replied, meeting the question repeated in her eyes. "I don't dare say, Babbie, yet."

And here, perhaps, Paul found that in turn he, too, was asking a question long ready. Certainly he shivered a little when he found his heart had spoken out. It was only in his tone, no more than a hint, but it seemed to him that his words could hardly be mistaken.

A little frown drew her brows down for a second. "Of course it's all new. You're not in the swing of it yet. I wish you'd gone to the Language Club." She laughed at her own blunder, yet seemed not sorry to have been rude, since she had said exactly what was true. And she added, almost fiercely: "You *will* keep at it, Paul?"

He thought, or rather hoped, he read her aright, and leaned forward. "Do you care, then, Babbie?"

"I care for any—every boy to try to make something out of himself." Her voice rose a little; her face was all alright. "Something big, Paul! I don't care whether it's a bishop, or a general, or a surgeon, or a jockey. And once you've decided to go through the graduate work

and be a great scholar, and everybody says how well you 'll do, and grandfather advises it, and—oh, Paul, don't be doubtful about it! You don't really hesitate now, do you?"

"You 're eloquent as you can be, Babbie—"

"Ah, do try it! Such a good life, Paul! I know it so well. It 's almost the best, I think. Look at my grandfather."

She was very eager in her suit, because she had breathed college air all her life, and every day saw beside her what the college training makes a man once he takes it to his heart. And here was one Barbara knew so finely fit for the work, one she had always been very fond of, meeting him like brother and sister, who needed only a bit more urging to undertake what she held, next the priesthood, a man's best task. Small wonder, then, that she talked so well, recovering herself if she tripped a little, pleading, advising, very beautiful as her pulse quickened; and small wonder, too, that Gardiner, watching her, hearing her so earnest for him, formed a resolution greater than that he confirmed to her that night.

For both of them, however, the evening's work—her counseling, his hope and decision—was no new thing. A month ago they had played the same story through, in Paris, two weeks after he had met her with the old professor.

It all came about in the queerest way. It was rather strange that neither of them had noticed the impromptu beginning of what was of so very great importance; but this was because both of them acted simply as they were impelled by the natures God had put in them.

For two weeks they had met at intervals, invited to this excursion or that dinner by Mrs. Tew, who was splendidly installed in the great new hotel on the Champs Elysées, once or twice taking a day-long trip with Professor Hare, who knew half a dozen interesting people—painters or peasants—an hour out of Paris. Their companionship was again as close as it was in the days they played together up in the country before Paul went to college; and to Paul, living in Barbara's presence, there came in a flash of awakening the belief that, after all, his life was bent to a single purpose. He waited, watching very carefully, eager for her direction to the way he ought to walk.

And at last that happened which was to mean so very much to both of them.

It was a cool, sunny day, he remembered so well afterward, and he had spent the time before luncheon with a friend in the Beaux-Arts, who lived at the top of a house next the school, on the side toward the river. He had come down

and dodged across the Rue Bonaparte, when all at once he came full upon her just in front of the big photograph-shop. Her hand was on the door-knob when he spoke.

Would he wait while she bought something? And then they would walk back to the hotel, where Professor Hare was to meet her at noon-time.

To his questions she gave answers which together added up to quite a story. "He can't get these things at home, you see," said Barbara, taking up her roll of photographs.

"So you buy them for him?" She was fairer than ever.

"Yes. I'm very much interested. He works so hard, and is so entirely devoted to his trade—or art, I suppose I ought to call it. He's a nice boy."

"What have you there?" he asked, beginning again.

"They're the details of the Clairvaux chests over in the Cluny; you know them. And part of the Amiens choir-stalls, and one or two others. Very nice, indeed. I only hope he can use them."

"He's a wood-worker?"

"Yes. Carves superbly. The furniture people give him a good deal of work, and the architects. He does mantels and things."

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"You're very good, Babbie. I—I like to think of your doing work of that sort. Most girls—"

She laughed a little, then spoke at once, interrupting him. "Oh, he's so worth an effort, Paul! He's a worker. He has a career. Of course he's poor, but it's very fine in him—that steady go-ahead all the time. I like men of that sort."

He winced as under a blow, but she gave him no heed. He believed truly she had not meant to strike him. So it was the worker, the man with a career, she liked! He ran over in his mind the dozen lives he had planned for himself, only to discard the plan a month afterward. He remembered Mr. Austin's pleading letter from Ashley, and Dick Farquhar's, which had so tempted him with its tale of the brave doings of the gentleman-farmers.

They threaded their way along the boulevard, as far as the corner of their own street, without a word spoken. Then Barbara halted to glance at her watch.

"It's early still," she said. "Don't you want to walk a while longer? Grandfather won't expect me till twelve."

The street was not so crowded here; the noise and chatter and bright dazzle of the Place St. Germain was well behind them. They could

walk at their ease; they laughed at things they saw in the shop windows. A squad of cuirassiers clattered and jingled past in full dress, and Paul explained to her how heavy cavalry was now obsolete. They went by one or two of the dull old hotels, with their glimpse of courts full of palms and their languid *Suisse*, when Barbara told the history of the great name they bore. They came to the Rue du Bac, and here Barbara proposed they should turn home again. There were a dozen things they talked of; but when he was alone once more, Paul perceived that, in some way, Barbara had led straight from the little wood-carver back in Oldport to his own case, when she asked him, shifting ever so slightly from the man Paul had spent the morning with:

“What are you going to do yourself, Paul?”

“I?” he repeated; and then blurted out, “I don’t know exactly.”

“You’ll do *something?*” she asked anxiously.

“Yes, indeed.” He hated to have to qualify his enthusiasm. “But I can’t decide, you see. I’ve been thinking about the old place in Ashley. My father wished me to take it up, you know.” She nodded, caressed him with a glance full of sympathy for his black coat, but gave no definite answer.

"Have you talked with grandfather? He's so wise and so careful. And he's fond of you, Paul."

He shook his head, then glanced at her walking beside him. "Suppose you suggest something," he replied, between jest and earnest.

To his vast delight, Barbara took him more seriously than he had hoped. They had chaffed each other all their life, so her sudden earnestness toward him thrilled very strangely. Perhaps she still thought of the other young man she was trying to aid in a life-work. "Have you ever thought of coming back to Oldport?" she inquired at once, just as though she had been waiting her chance.

Oldport! He had wondered often how he would like the scholar life, he remembered. And now!

"Really? Do you mean it?"

"Why not?" she retorted. "It's worth considering, Paul."

He wondered swiftly if she could guess what her words meant to him, then smiled away a thought which was very silly indeed. He could live near her, see her often, walk with her, hear her voice and her laugh,—that is what Oldport meant to him at the first moment. But he checked what surged up from his heart to say to

her. The little wood-carver had to show himself sincere in his work before Barbara had looked toward him.

They walked along more slowly even than before, but with never a pause for the things to right and left. Barbara told him all she knew of the scholar life; he learned of a work she held the world's highest; he learned that for her a man's best work was the man. If he winced a little, he was glad of what she told him, for his course was clear enough now. He knew how he must go about the winning of his prize. Ashley Farm once more made famous would not be enough.

"Will your grandfather see me?" Paul asked when they were at the door of the hotel. "I—I think I'd like to talk this over with him, Babbie."

"Of course." She seemed very happy. "You must n't decide at once, Paul. A mistake is so dreary. And if your father was very eager about the farm—"

He was surprised at his craftiness. "The farm? Yes, indeed. You must give me a *little* time."

Long evenings had followed, full of good talk, memorable as passed with the old professor. Very dutifully Paul had listened; his questions

were many and apt; Barbara smiled at him across the table. And now, after a space, they found themselves playing over again the scene they had acted on the Boulevard St. Germain that bright August day.

“Give it a trial; keep at it. You ’ll find it ’s *your* work after a little, Paul.” The flame within her blazed generously once more. “And — and, Paul, not half-way, you know.”

The hour boomed out mellow on the heavy air from the chapel belfry. The young man stood up.

“I had no idea it was so late,” he protested. “But it ’s been very delightful.”

She took his hand. “Good night, Paul. You —”

“What?”

“You ’ll excuse me for lecturing so? But we do feel so strongly — all of us — about it.” She made a little gesture which had something of despair in it. “I *do* hope you ’ll try hard, Paul. You ’ve begun so well.”

The other looked up quickly, as trying to read her face in the darkness.

“Do *you* hope it for me?” he asked hardly.

“Of course I hope it for you,” cried Barbara. “We all do.”

Her tone swept like a fresh breeze through his thought, chilling while it revived.

"I think I must n't disappoint you — all," said Paul.

It seemed more his habit than his will which hurried Professor Hare up the street toward the Campus. It was Friday night; the Language Club awaited his presence; the new college year had fairly opened for him; he met Dr. Wren, who always had something interesting to talk about. But, nevertheless, Professor Hare had lingered on his porch before starting out; and now, as he walked along, he had most in mind that he could feel Barbara's kiss still warm on his cheek, and the tingle of Paul Gardiner's hand-clasp still on his fingers. They were good children, he observed to Dr. Wren, just as soon as the least chance offered. It was pleasant to have them by.

"Do you have young Gardiner much there?" Dr. Wren inquired.

"We saw a good deal of him this Summer in Paris. He 's here for graduate work now. A fine fellow, Wren. It was to talk over his work that he came to dinner to-night. He 's been rather undecided about things, but I think he 'll stay on. We want that type, Wren. I 'm hoping Barbara will prove to him how that 's his only course. She 's quite a missionary."

"She could convert me to anything," remarked

Dr. Wren. "I wish her every success. And I wish young Gardiner every happiness."

The dry old bookman cackled dreadfully as he turned away. Professor Hare found him, as usual, rather unpleasant; but the striking of the hour at which he was due at his meeting whisked away for the moment all remembrance of his colleague's words or accent.

The room was full when Professor Hare took his seat at the head of the long oak table, which ran nearly from one end to the other. The little crowd was made up mostly of graduate students and younger members of the Faculty, though in a corner were a few undergraduates ill at ease.

A dismal quiet sat heavy on them all. Some of the men exchanged platitudes in monosyllables — stock questions and answers about their vacations or the number of courses they had elected for the coming year. The women — there were some half-dozen there — sat very still, their eyes on the floor or on back pages of their scribbled note-books, bearing their learning with as little grace as though its weight crushed them. Perhaps some of the poison in the air of the close room had infected them all. Only Mr. Karayama, who was down to read the principal paper and open the discussion, retained a spreading smile and a twinkle in his narrow, spectacled

eyes. On the rest, on men and women alike, were the marks of the long day—morning and afternoon in the library of the class-room or the bleak study in some forlorn boarding-house. You would say they were whipping themselves to a new lap in the race, without any rest from a dozen earlier struggles. Professor Hare felt a clutch in his heart at the wan grins which answered his greeting. He felt like thanking the cheery Japanese for his tolerant smile and air of fine aloofness.

For two hours the Master sat behind his little fort of books at the head of the table, eager as a boy, strong and cool as a general. For two hours he watched closely the rows of white faces, and answered the appeal in hungry eyes, grieving for the wants while he felt pride in the spirit that was driving those men and women to seek the high things. He listened to the slow struggles of the Japanese with English idiom; now he spurred lightly each of a pair of disputants. There were women to meet obstinate in half culture; there were the crudities of undergraduate thought to smooth away. Nine o'clock found him with no thought save the working out of the discussion in hand. He rode in full panoply, lance at rest, visor down.

“Unless I misread him altogether,” simpered

Miss Ross, "Schlegel says that even in comedy there enters an element of earnestness. And—"

"But—one minute!" The interruption came from a woman across the table. She might have been cross-examining a witness. "I *thought* you said just now that farce was comedy. Did n't you?"

"Yes, I did." Miss Ross reared.

"Of course I don't know Shakspeare *very* well, but is n't it possible to find passages in his work—"

"Why, yes. But Meredith says—"

Professor Hare looked away to green fields. Just now he would have been angry with any one who found in the least degree tedious the formless debate which had struggled up; just now he could see the fruit of coming scholarship behind fluent misinterpretations and wrong quoting of great men's words. He had been leader and champion and guide. But in the twinkling of an eye something rose within him and mastered him at a stroke. The air had grown corrupt and dense, the voices of the disputants shrill and nasal to the last point of endurance.

He cast about for a reason, and found none. Then, all clear, he had a vision of his granddaughter, so beautiful, so lovely, waiting for him at home in the big cool house. It was she who

gently took his sword away, and Dr. Hare smiled in his surrender.

He grew fiercely indignant at the slow speech of good Karayama, fretted by a woman's whining into a savage promise to revoke his indorsement of her application for a scholarship. It was incredible that any intelligent being should fail to perceive when he or she is getting tiresome. "But you cannot teach or learn tact," growled Professor Hare. He felt proof against the surprise and pain in the eyes of his followers when he openly consulted his watch and snapped to the lid as loudly as possible. He pushed his chair back the moment a pause came in the swift play of assertion and contradiction.

"It's getting rather late," he announced. "I'm sure we are all much indebted to you, Mr. Karayama. You've given us a good deal to think about. Very suggestive,—very."

Those few men who had slipped down to half-easy attitudes in their straight-backed chairs came upright again and smiled feebly at one another. One or two note-books came together with a slap. The undergraduates reached openly for their hats. But the greater number made no movement, and the women held tense as wire.

"There iss one point more I should — would

laike *to raise*," observed the Japanese, querulous under his politeness.

Professor Hare's smile matched his. "I was about to say that, if Mr. Karayama is willing, I'm sure we should all enjoy having him continue his discussion through our next session. Can you postpone your paper, Miss Harding?"

"Certainly. I'd rather put more time on it, if possible."

"Very well, then. Suppose we hear the rest next time, Mr. Karayama."

"*Ob, yes.*"

Very slowly the meeting dispersed. Custom ordered that the professor should wait till all had filed out and down the narrow stairs. He had to wait for what he could swear was an hour—so hard his heart beat for Barbara—till the reeking room was cleared. "Come back very soon," she had said. He feared greatly lest anybody linger to ask banal questions about life-work or culture's mission in America. He bent his head low over the writing of foolish sentences, in the hope that the students might believe him too busy for conversation.

"She's looking so well," he remarked to his pencil, half conscious, perhaps, of the passing of Miss Ross. The latter's gray face was a kind of palimpsest, the evening's new thoughts scrawled

on a surface which still bore traces of earlier inscriptions. Barbara was dark, with high color and eyes that glowed. The professor told himself again how much she resembled her dear mother.

There passed a heavy-browed, tall fellow, unlike the rest, somehow. Professor Hare looked up, and held out his hand.

"How are you, Mr. Bowers? Glad to see you again."

"Glad to see *you*, sir."

"Nice getting back again, eh?"

"Yes, indeed. Dale means a good deal to us poor fellows."

"You poor fellows mean a good deal to Dale." The professor relinquished the young man's hand as if reluctantly. "Come and see us, Bowers."

"Thank you. Good night."

"If they were all like him!" Professor Hare murmured. "Or like Paul Gardiner," he added.

Then he turned out the gas, and hurried down into the street.

She was in a low chair, with the shining of a lamp over her, bright in the somber dusk of the big book-lined library. The professor had mounted the porch and stepped along the en-

trance-hall very softly to surprise her, so stood unguessed in the doorway for nearly a minute.

This was better, he told himself, than the clamor and battle and dust of the scene he had quitted.

A thousand times he had watched her in the same way. There were the nights, ever so far back now but still remembered so vividly, when black Hannah admitted him to the dim-lit nursery, finger on lip, eyes rolling with mystery, to lean over the tiny bed and thank God for leaving him this memory of his dead boy; when he retreated breathlessly lest the sweep of his beard should touch the baby into waking. And later came the stretch of terrible hours when he stood behind the doctor, his heart breaking with the pain of the child's fever. Later still, when his eyes traveled restlessly from the elegancies of Sister Mary's conversation in the visitors' reception-room to the window which looked out on the school garden where Barbara was waiting all alone; when she knelt before the altar with its lights and lilies, and came back to her place very sober, yet with eyes that shone; when she puzzled out the initials on her dance-card, and put off three boys to dance with a fourth; when she romped with the ragged mites at the mission-school,—never once did the old man fail to be

near, never did a moment of her young life come and go but he watched its passage, happy in her happiness.

So to-night. For a minute the professor pleased himself in noting swiftly the confusion of detail: now the color, the shapely hands, then the delicate smile as she laughed with her book, the quick disdain when the book laughed too loudly.

The spell broke; she glanced up and saw him. And then Professor Hare was happier than before,—this always when they came together,—for she started up with a little cry, and ran to greet him like a lover long awaited.

"I hate these evenings," she declared. "I can't get used to them again after the summer."

He held her close. "Really?" he asked of the eyes that smiled up to his.

"You were very good to come home early, I think. Evening's about our only time together, now that college has begun."

"It's only now and then I'll have to be away," he replied, really sincere in his explanation. "We can't have vacation *all* the year, Babbie. Can we?"

"I don't like being without you," she answered, releasing him. She laughed at his next speech.

"I left you in good charge to-night, though. Was Gardiner as nice as ever?"

"Oh, yes." Then her tone brightened. "He's decided at last."

The professor clapped his hands. "That's capital! We all ought to be very happy. He's not at all the usual type; a man worth having here, Babbie. I'm mighty glad. What did he say?"

"Oh, I don't remember exactly. We talked and talked. And I gave him lots of advice. And I meant it, too."

"That's good. I'm more than pleased." He paused, then asked her, malicious as a boy, "You'll be glad to have him back, I suppose, young lady?"

She countered swiftly. "Any one who wheedled the rich and beautiful widow Hughes into his courses need n't taunt *me* with selfish motives. That, sir, was nothing short of scandalous."

They laughed together, and fell to talking of other things. There were plans for Barbara's work at the mission to discuss; the report about the meeting of the Language Club to deliver; the news of Aunt Tew and her progresses to laugh about. And because they loved the remembrance, it was inevitable that they should run over together some bits of their summer's

life in Paris — the work in the Bibliothèque, the jollity of the week of the 14th. And on the heels of this followed of course some more about Paul Gardiner. Barbara was very elate over her successful missionary work. She had succeeded again in helping her grandfather's least desire to its fulfilment. She had lived out her life creed again.

"Thank you, dear," said Professor Hare.

She found his acknowledgment a little curter than usual, and wondered at it for a moment's space, on the point of teasing him about ingratitude. But the old man's smile had faded away, and he sat, struck silent. She took up her idle book again.

"Was there any danger?" the professor asked himself. It must not come, he needed her so sadly. She owed him still some of the years he had given her. He was selfish, perhaps. The girl must not make a sacrifice; her life was her own. All the stock arguments he ran over again, and, as usual, came out from their fire unscathed. She was his. It would not be long; he was an old man.

This boy now!

It was his sister who first had brought this trouble into his life.

He had been telling Mrs. Tew about the girl

and of their dear life together. He told of their long readings and talks, of their visits to famous studios and breakfasts with this or that great man or woman. There were the walks through the old Paris of his student days; there was the cruise to the East; there was the memorable week at the English statesman's country house.

"That's all very interesting and delightful," Mrs. Tew had said in reply. "But Barbara's always with you, is n't she?"

"Certainly."

"And you are seventy years old. Don't you see, Winthrop?" asked Mrs. Tew.

Now the phantom glided into the room again.

"Barbara!"

"Yes, grandfather?" Her book closed instantly.

"Nothing. I—so Gardiner has decided?"

"Yes, sir. I told him how we all hoped he'd do so well, and how it was his duty to try, anyway. And he promised,—very earnestly, too. Tell me, will he be under you at all?"

"Probably." The professor watched her ever so close. "He's a nice boy."

"Very. And bright. He needs being made to work, though."

Professor Hare tugged his great white beard. He could not keep back any longer, try as he

might. "And the beggar will succeed, and say that you started him, and will carry you away to show how grateful he is. I'll owe my gods a thank-offering, I suppose, he'll do me such vast credit."

Perhaps he was trying her, as he had so often before. Perhaps he raised the phantom only for the satisfaction of laying it again. Perhaps he listened to his sister, or just now to Dr. Wren's hints and laughter, because it was so easy to answer.

Her eyes filled with sudden trouble, for his face was sad and his tone bitter. She went to him.

"I was afraid you meant it for a moment," she murmured, on the arm of his chair.

"No, dear, no." The warmth settled again about his old heart. "You're mine, I know."

"Yours!" she whispered. "Yours always, dearest!"

III

CROSSED SWORDS

THE Language Club melted away into the night, the undergraduate members alone breaking forth into joy, just as they did after every recitation or lecture that came to a close sooner than expected. Most like them were the three or four young instructors, who made the best of their way to the jollity of the University Club. Truest of all to their chosen rôle of earnest seekers after light and truth, the graduate students flitted away through quiet streets to dark houses, rejoicing audibly that, if the *Seminar* broke up an hour too soon, they had an hour more for work; or, like Bowers and another man named Cameron, carrying on hotly, as they walked along, the discussion of the hour before.

"Where are you living this year, Bowers?" The man dropped his argument abruptly as the two came into the Campus.

"Up in West. I 'm proctoring this year. It 's a great saving, I tell you."

"I applied too late, I guess. The Dean recommended me, though."

"I thought I was in luck. Won't you come up? I've got two chairs, both sittable."

The other laughed a little. "Let's stay out here on the Fence awhile. It'll seem as though we were about juniors. You're not busy, are you?"

"I'll loaf for once."

"It's good for you. Sit down here."

Once comfortably installed,—and the Fence-rails were comfortable for those who had been trained in Dale's ways,—their pipes glowing quietly, the young men breathed deep a kind of tranquillity which they found the sweeter because it was in the way of becoming strange to them. It was the first hour that week, they discovered on comparing notes, that either had sat still doing nothing. There had been envelops to direct at so much or so little a thousand; there had been some clerical work in the Dean's office; there had been long tramps about town looking for places as waiter in this or that student boarding-house. The rivalry was keener that Fall than ever, somehow. The incoming freshmen included a veritable swarm of poor boys who were as eager as they to get work. The authorities did all they could, but there remained still anxious days and hungry days even for the men whose ambitions

were known and approved, who for six years fought with only a single free hand for their honors, the other busy holding hunger by the throat. A little later, when one or two good places had been secured as furnace-man, for instance, or as waiter, things would be easier to arrange. But the first few weeks of the Fall term were very dreary.

"I had a good job last Summer," said Bowers. "I took sailing parties in the old cat-boat. It was nothing but bull-luck, though."

"That was great. I played conductor on a trolley-line. You ought to see me in brass buttons. I 'm picturesque, Bowers, always."

"Anything in it?"

"A little. A good lot if you forget to ring up fares. But I was more or less honest, I regret to say."

"So was I. Look here." The big fellow reached deep into an inside pocket, and displayed a couple of slim books. "Feel 'em?"

"A check-book?" Cameron asked the question in a voice full with disbelief. "Really?"

"Really!" Bowers chuckled. "A genuine bank account at last, young man."

"Good Lord! I 'm very glad, Jack. That 's good work." He fought back any trace of envy from his tone. "First-class!"

"Oh, well, it is n't *very* much." There came a kind of constraint into their presence. Bowers had forgotten, perhaps, that his fellow was not, like himself, near the end of a successful fight. Cameron was sunk still in the mire of battle. Bowers was emerging to hear the usual applause with which Dale men greet those of their number whose courage and will are greater than their poverty. He forgot that of every class a third was battling as he had. He was not so very great a hero where all were heroes. He began again, after a pause. "I see Gardiner's back this year. I did n't know he was the sort to go in for graduate work, exactly. He did n't do much but play foot-ball in college."

"He was bright, though. He stood pretty high. Old Hare's backing him, they say."

"Maybe. Lord, what a pull!"

"Look out he don't get the traveling fellowship next year," Cameron laughed.

The other set his jaw hard on his pipe-stem. "It would finish me if he did. I *must* have it, Cameron!" he added fiercely. "Look how I've worked for it. They won't dare keep it from me. Does n't plain hard work count for anything in this place, I wonder?"

"That check-book of yours," Cameron remarked, as though the subject fascinated him. "Have you drawn any yet?"

“No.”

“Don’t you itch for it?”

“We money-kings really tire of spending money, young sir. I can’t tell what I’ll buy next. Have I not food, raiment, and a college library to draw from? And I don’t care for vice.”

“No, but seriously, Bowers.” There was nothing but admiring envy in his voice. To Cameron the speech of his companion was as though his best instructor had jested with his subject. It jarred unpleasantly.

“Seriously, I think I’ll get an overcoat. Can’t go *two* winters with only heavy gloves. And you can get real thick ones down at Knapp’s for nine dollars, I think.”

“Nine dollars?”

“Yes.”

“Funny. That’s just what the books for Barclay’s course come to. You can get ‘em all second-hand. I asked, just for fun.” Cameron sighed. Every book in his room either had the University book-plate in it, or had been loaned him by the authorities in charge of such things, as being worthy and poor. Something prompted him to add: “They’re worth having, too.”

“I should say so. Nine dollars? You’re sure that’s all?”

“Sure.”

"Can't *you* get 'em ?"

"I ?" Cameron did not tell how he had drunk deep of sorrow as he handled the volumes he could not buy. "Jantzen has 'em all. The 'Poetics' is the numbered edition."

"Nine dollars ?"

"There 's the kid, Bowers. He 's got to get some help. He 's only a freshman, you know. No, I 'll—I 'll wait a little, I guess."

Up in his room Bowers dumped some papers from his chair and pulled it up to the pine kitchen table which served him for a desk. The place was very old—as old, within a few years, as any room in this country, he had explained, not without pride. The plaster of the low ceiling was smoky between the great beams, the carpetless floor sagged under foot, the damp air was heavy with the odor of a century and a half of life and sleep. In a kind of windowless alcove a bed sprawled unmade, for one saved a little each month by not making use of the dormitory servants; and a disorder of towels and a wash-bowl full of gray water filled the rest of the narrow cubicle. His bachelor's diploma, and some photographs of middle-aged country-folk in a kind of wire rack, hung to the right and left of the door; and from the wall-space over the chimney-shelf, *Mona Lisa* smiled inscrutably,

— a beautiful print, bought God knows at what expense. She mocked, as always, with her smile those who are surprised to find her anywhere save in palaces. In the door-frame of the alcove was tacked up the likeness of another woman, cut from an illustrated magazine. It represented a very beautiful creature with dark, serious eyes.

Of all these things Bowers took no heed. He sat down under the glow of the tin lamp, and spread open his check-book, then made some slow reckonings on the back of an envelop. Then he sat back to think very resolutely.

He fancied their look on the chimney-shelf — only five, not enough to lengthen out the line very far, to be sure. He could borrow them somewhere, anyway. But the nights he could spend with them, not hurrying through so as to get each back to the library inside the short three weeks! To mark, to make notes, to write his name in them! To learn them by heart! There were the great Greeks and the Frenchmen. He longed to hear them speak to him from their thrones.

On a quick impulse he dated his check and numbered it.

Then came the dull weight of the remembrance of January mornings and their wind over

the hilltop, of the nights when the Winter mist wraps one close.

He glanced at his clock. It was close to ten. Jantzen would be open still, if he hurried.

"I suppose I'm a fool," Bowers said to the woman smiling at him from her frame. But if she answered, Bowers did not hear, for the next moment he was in the street.

"Of course I maig you a special prize," said Jantzen, the bookman. "For you will buy more. *Hein?*"

Bowers hurried back up the hill, the new books in two bundles, one under each arm. The street was still alive, for the night was warm and the restlessness of the term's beginning sent the boys out in pairs or laughing groups of three or four to idle down-town and back. Sober citizens grinned at their doings; housewives, flurried from shopping and the jostle of the crowd, made acid comments on the behavior of "them as oughter know better"; and belated shop-girls, hurrying for the trolley-cars, waxed indignant or flashed back an invitation over their shoulders. Young life pulsed about him. Bowers clutched Aristotle to his heart, tucked Helmholtz more firmly into the crook of his arm, and held on his way. He was looking forward to the full feast that should begin as soon as he got to his room.

On the corner just opposite the first of the Dale buildings, he ran full tilt into two men who came out of the hotel. The shock sent Helmholtz to earth.

"Beg your pardon," said one of the men.
"Did n't see you at all."

Something in the voice took away Bowers's anger. "That's all right," he said, very civilly for him. Then he saw who the other was.
"Hello, Gardiner!"

"Bowers, I declare! I'm glad to see you."

The third man broke in on their hand-shaking.
"Well, I'll talk to you again, Paul. I don't believe you really mean what you say."

"It's no use, Jack. I really can't possibly think of it. I have n't time. Wait a second, Bowers."

"So you'll let the team go?"

"Team'll get along all right, I guess."

The head coach sighed. His lips came together. "I did n't think you'd go back on us, Paul. You, the best damned tackle—"

Gardiner laughed. "Come off! You don't mean that, Jack. Think it over. But I won't give you an hour. I can't afford it."

He caught Bowers by the elbow and hurried across the street, leaving the head coach to fume all by himself. "I'm glad you came along,"

said Paul. "He 'd have me pledged to spend the Fall coaching the team, sure, if I had n't broken away."

The other regarded Paul curiously. "So you really—"

"Really." Paul nodded. "Foot-ball 'd take all my days and nights if I got started."

Bowers seemed to himself vaguely to comprehend. Like the others of his race, those who spend their days at Dale in a steady round between one lecture and another, with only such break as the reading-room and the book-stacks in the library afford, he knew only by hearsay of the life on the track and field and water. He had never seen one of the great foot-ball games. But he knew what those struggles meant to the men who fought through them; once or twice he caught himself envying just a bit the shoulders and the clear eyes of this oarsman or that quarter-back. He perceived somehow that the man walking at his side had put behind him something very dear, something that almost engaged his honor, when he told the coach that there was to be no foot-ball for him that Fall.

"You 've got sand, all right," observed Bowers. "Going to study, eh ?"

"Sure I am. I 've played too long, I guess."

Paul laughed a little. "You 'll have to show me how, Bowers."

"Will you come up?" the student asked. They had reached the door of his dingy entry.

"Won't I bother you?"

Bowers waited a moment, wondering how long Gardiner would stay. Already he cursed the impulse that made him invite Paul in.

"I guess you 'd rather work than talk to me."

"No, no, no," Bowers protested hastily. "Not a bit of it. Come ahead."

"There *are* some things I wanted to ask you."

"I guess I can tell you '*most* anything. Let me go ahead. It 's dark as your pocket on these stairs."

It would be interesting, after all, Bowers reflected, to measure the power of this man who had come from outside into the college world that works to learn the messages the bookmen have to tell their disciples. He laughed aloud, remembering Cameron's warning joke about this philistine's taking the Washington Fellowship away from him. He laughed again when Paul began to ask some questions as to the courses he had chosen.

Gardiner smiled. "I know I 'm pretty ignorant."

"The beginning of better things," the other was pleased to reply.

He gloried in the half-hour that followed. He would have been more than human if he had not enjoyed the sight of this Gardiner coming to him for advice and help. He had lived hard and worked, while Paul nodded to him carelessly when they passed each other on the street. More than once he had been stung deep by the successful man's offhand notice. He did not spare him when he found that Paul believed he could carry Dale's scholar-world by storm.

"It 's a good deal of a grind sometimes," said Bowers, rubbing his jaw with his big thumb. "Dirty work."

"But Denny Hare said to me that I —"

"Ah! he 's forgotten the hard part. He 's so far beyond the little things, you see. Think you 'll like it?"

"I 'm going to try blazing hard."

Bowers leaned back in his rickety chair, smiling quietly. Paul's eyes had grown stubborn. "Tell me something, Gardiner."

"What is it? You 've answered enough of my questions."

"It 's none of my business, I suppose." The big fellow exploded in a laugh. "But I have n't any manners, you know."

Paul looked around from the line of books. He had begun a slow tour of the grimy room.

"What made you start working in the Graduate School? You're not the kind that comes here as a usual thing. You'll make an awful funny-looking teacher. How did you get the idea?"

Paul continued his tour. He came to the alcove's arch. For a second he bent forward to look at the picture of the young girl that was pinned there to the scarred casing. Then he touched it lightly with his finger.

"Isn't that a picture of Miss Hare?"

"Barbara?"

"Miss Hare." Paul's lips set in a hard line at the other's tone. "Or perhaps it's some one who looks like her."

"As though anybody could!" cried Bowers, scrambling to his feet. "That's a wretched likeness." He crossed the room in two strides, and stood at Paul's side, breathing hard. "It was all I could get, though. I cut it out of some weekly or other. She was in a group with some other women — and some men, too. It was a bloody garden party, I guess. Over in Paris."

Paul remembered. The whole of that bright afternoon flashed again before him, clear and gay. He remembered how they all had laughed when

the ambassador won his match at tennis; how near he had come to a breach of international comity when the viscount began to study Barbara Hare's beauty and supple grace. To think that he should have all those things recalled to him up here in Bowers's greasy cave — the sun, her pretty clothes!

"Know her?" asked Bowers. "Yes, of course you must. You're the tame cat at the house, they say."

"Do they? People take a lot of bother to interest themselves in me, it seems."

Bowers went over to the window and stood staring into the night, Paul watching him curiously.

"What's she like close to?" asked the student, apparently of the darkness. "I wonder. I—I've seen her so often, you know."

"Miss Hare's very charming," Paul replied. "Devoted to her grandfather."

"That's it!" Bowers's eyes glittered under his heavy brows. "It's the scholarship she prizes. He's a regular god to her, because he's so great in our line." He gestured clumsily. "In our magnificent calling, I should say. She ought to be studying herself instead of wasting her time at luncheons and golf and — and that sort of thing. She's Dale's patron saint, by God."

The fellow started to tramp about the room, laughing at his joke, though Paul said no word. "I never spoke to her. She does n't know I exist, unless she 's heard of me playing secretary to the old man—and that 's possible, of course." He stopped short for a second, then resumed his tramp. "Ha! But if I find her, if I find anybody in this weary world with a crust to hand the student, and a nod of the head when he wins a prize, I 'll make fast to 'em tight. I like that sort of people, and I 'm the sort they like, too." He halted again in front of the little picture, studied it for a minute, then looked at Paul. "She 's Mæcenas, she 's Lorenzo, only she pays with a smile. Blessed are the scholars and the students. Verily I say unto you, they shall have their reward."

Paul tried to laugh.

"Do you know her well?" asked Bowers, swiftly, scowling deep.

"I 've always known her. We were brought up together, you might say."

"Ha!" The broad thumb was scraping the jaw again. "What made you come to the Graduate School? You?"

"To get to know you better," Paul answered, picking up his hat. "And I 'm coming to see you soon again, although you 're crazy as a loon."

"Your presence has maddened me," the other said solemnly. And as Paul shut the door and groped his way to the head of the staircase, Bowers added, with a great oath, "And that 's as true a word as ever I spoke."

He rushed to the window and leaned far out.

"Oh, Gardiner!"

"Hello?"

"I hope you 'll like your work."

"Thanks."

"And, Gardiner? Still there?"

"Yes. What is it?"

The big man rolled about in a fit of giant laughter.

"You must n't care if you get downed in your tracks just when you think you 're going over for a touchdown. Scholarship 's an awful rough game."

A heavy quiet lay over Dr. Hare's study. It was ten o'clock in the morning of a day some three weeks after Paul had stumbled down the dark stairs from Bowers's room. Up and down the street the electric cars buzzed and rattled, heavy truck-horses strained their loads up the slight grade, with much slipping of heavy hoofs on the asphalt and cursing of drivers,—a low roar lightened by the clatter of delivery-wagons and buggies. From the other side of the door

came various household noises. A heavy table or chair was being pushed aside, one would guess, to make room for Hannah's brushing. Now and then there was a sound of water being drawn.

Around and about the study rose a steady song of workaday hurry—little cares, little tasks telling each other of themselves, complaining or cheery, according to the mood of him who listened to them. But in the big room there was not a sound. You would guess that here was no work being done at all. You would welcome it as one of those havens of rest and peace in the midst of life's storms, the oasis in a desert of which story-writers and preachers have much to say.

The solemn tiers of books were dull of color, and made gloomy all the walls nearly to the ceiling. The rugs were faded to beautiful tones; the mahogany glowed softly in the mellow sunlight; there was a fine disorder of papers on the great writing-table. And in deep chairs, reading quietly, sat two men at their ease, the older savoring a great pipe of delicate aroma.

For an hour there was not a sound, except the light rustle of the leaves as the readers began their new pages, or the slight noise of the soft pencil with which Dr. Hare was scoring notes on the margins. It did not look at all like work, somehow.

"Bowers?"

"Yes, sir." The younger man marked his place with a bit of paper and laid his book down.

"Ready?"

"Yes, sir."

He had spread out a note-book on his knees and, pencil in hand, looked to the Master.

"This German," remarked Dr. Hare, waving his book and then bringing it down hard on the arm of his chair, "is an idiot."

"Idiot," repeated Bowers, scratching down his shorthand.

Dr. Hare beamed. "I should like to start the review in exactly those words, young man. They are true words, and they are brief. What do you think?"

"I'm here to learn," replied Bowers.

"Really? A young junior, whose name I choose to forget, told me yesterday that he believed Bowers knew about everything. I gathered that you'd told him as much."

"Very likely." Bowers laughed. "Why not?"

The Master laughed with him, but in the next second was tugging at his great silky beard. "Now we'll begin in earnest, Bowers. Your close attention, please. Let's see — let's see."

He grumbled to himself, rose, and took a turn or two about the room. Bowers waited, watching the old man closely. He hoped he would not have to interrupt, but already somebody had knocked softly at the door three times.

"Grandfather?" The voice was very soft.

Bowers sat up straighter, his big eyes aglow. He did not notice that the Master had begun to dictate.

"Got that?" asked Dr. Hare, not looking around.

"No, sir. I—"

Again the knock at the door. The Master whirled about. "Your closer attention, please, Mr. Bowers."

The young man flushed under the reproof, and bent again over his note-book.

"Now, sir," said Dr. Hare. "Begin, if you please. This long-awaited edition—" He broke off as the knocking was repeated. "Confound those officious servants! They know perfectly well I'm not to be interrupted. Apparently I can't have a single hour to myself. My temper's as good as the average man's, but—"

"Grandfather?" There was laughter in the voice.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Hare.

"Shall I go on?" asked Bowers, grinning

covertly. But the old man was already at the door, and Bowers got to his feet.

A gush of mellow light poured in from the hall and circled like a glory the young figure standing in the doorway. In her pale-green dress she seemed a part of the sunny coolness.

"Your letters," she said. "They came very late, and I knew you 'd want to see them before noon. I 'm sorry if I interrupted your dictation," she added, with a glance toward the hulking figure of the secretary.

"You interrupt me!" cried the Master. "As though you could!"

He took the great sheaf of letters from the girl and drew her into the room with one gesture. She yielded herself to his quick embrace as she passed him.

"Run them through for me, like a good girl," Dr. Hare was saying when Bowers recovered himself. "Sit yourself over yonder by the window."

She hesitated. "The desk —"

"If you 'd rather."

"There 's more room so. Unless I shall disturb you," she said to Bowers, doubtfully.

"Oh, that 's all right," he replied. "I 'm writing on my knees."

The quiet came down over the room again.

For a half-hour the Master dictated, referring now and again to his scribbled notes. His voice rose at times; he seemed angry, his sentences were full of bitterness under their apparent suavity. He never so much as glanced at Barbara, for the German had sinned and the judge was passing severe sentence upon him.

Bowers toiled along as fast as he could. Page after page of the red-lined note-book were turned over; his pencil point wore down to a blunt stub, his back ached from bending.

And Barbara busied herself soberly with the letters. The publishers' circulars she threw into the great Apache basket along with the torn envelops and wrappers. The bills she folded lengthwise and indorsed names and amounts on their backs, with a half-frown and a despairing shake of the head, or a moment's puzzlement on her brow. The letters from the dean or the president, or this or that faculty committee, she placed in one heap, those from the learned societies — notices and invitations — by themselves in a second, and the others, marked "Personal," she did not open at all, but fastened together with a rubber band.

The room was very busy — as busy as the noisy street or the rest of the house. Each in a separate way, the three worked, with never

a stop, for a long half-hour. Then Bowers spoke up.

"Just a minute, Dr. Hare. My pencil's given out entirely."

Never before had he seen her so near. Now and then he would pass her on the street, tempted to follow when he realized who it was that had passed; at the great junior ball, two years before, he stood, uneasy in his hired evening clothes, watching her dance the night away; once she came to the college chapel and sat near enough for him to hear her singing and to study her beauty through the light veil. But never until now had Bowers enjoyed her very presence. She was beside him, so close that he could touch her almost, and for a half-hour the man had hungered for a look. Instinctively at first he had followed closely the meaning as well as the words of the Master's review; he promised himself to remember this or that bit of praise or blame. But it could not last. He rose in revolt against his task, and bore so hard on his stubby pencil that the worn point snapped off down to the wood. Perhaps she might speak to him now.

He dove into his pockets. "I'm afraid I have n't any knife, either," said Bowers.

Dr. Hare tugged at his beard. "Give him mine, Babbie. It's on the desk there."

She glanced up quickly, searched under the papers, and handed Bowers the knife, then pushed the Indian basket toward him.

"Much obliged," said Bowers, beginning to whittle.

She smiled at him, and went on with her docketing and sorting.

"Ready now?"

Bowers sighed and laid the knife on the edge of the desk. "Yes, Dr. Hare."

"Very well." And the big voice went grumbling on, while the secretary bent again to his shorthand.

It seemed so strange that the old man paid no attention to her. From the tail of his eye Bowers saw that she had straightened out all the litter of the great writing-table, and, when her task was done, that Barbara crossed the room, came back with a book, and settled herself among the cushions of the window-seat. She had a blue pencil like her grandfather's, and, like him, made notes on the margin of what seemed the report of some organization or institution. To Bowers her slightest move was a pose to remember, the turn of her head a revelation. He would have dwelt on a word from her as if it had been a poem. In all his barren life he had never seen anything so fair and wonderful, and he grew hotly indignant

with the old man who enjoyed spending this hour of her presence in flaying a pretentious pedant.

"That's all," announced the Master. "A copy by Wednesday, please, Bowers."

Barbara drummed on the window, then looked over her shoulder. "It's Paul, grandfather."

"So? Is he coming in?"

"Yes," answered Barbara.

Bowers pretended to be busy with back pages of his note-book when Paul burst in, and only nodded a reply to his greeting. He wondered that Dr. Hare showed no annoyance at having his working-time so broken. Just now he had seen the old man unable or unwilling to stop for a moment even when Barbara was by him, and the girl making herself a part of the room's quiet. Yet they both welcomed Paul with a laugh, and Barbara, tossing aside her book, made room for him on the window-seat. He waited, seeming to read at his ease.

"I'm going up to Ashley to-morrow," Paul announced.

"So?" Dr. Hare, standing at the book-case, looked down on him from the step-ladder. "For long?"

"Two or three days." Paul laughed. "I'm overtrained, I guess."

Bowers saw that the girl's eyes sought her grandfather's, and that they were full of sudden trouble. The old man looked again along the line of books, without a word.

"The country ought to be fine now, and Dick writes that they're having bully good fun with the quail."

"You know that Professor Forsythe lectures here on Friday? But of course you did n't," the Master said.

"I'll try to get back," Paul replied. "But I—"

"Just as you like, of course."

Bowers rose. He thought he saw his chance. "Have you anything more for me to do, sir? If not, I—"

Dr. Hare smiled from his perch. "No, no. Run along, boy. What comes next?"

"I have a lecture at twelve, sir. And I have to be at the eating-joint by one."

"And this afternoon and evening?"

Bowers grinned, and resisted the temptation to look at Paul, who sat so comfortably on the window-seat.

"Oh, some more work, sir. I can't afford a minute this year."

"Something special to win? A new prize?"

Bowers did glance at the pair in the window, and was delighted at the look of them, for Paul's

face was stony and Barbara's eyes, he was sure, measured him up and down.

"Yes, sir." He knew how to answer best this old scholar and this girl who loved the scholar-world. "A very special prize. And we're here at Dale to — to work, sir."

IV

ASHLEY AND RETURN

“WHO is that man?” asked Barbara, after Bowers had gone. Half hidden by the window-draperies, she watched the big fellow up the street.

“That’s Bowers,” the Master replied, descending heavily. “A good type. Ever know him in college, Paul?”

“No, sir. Not well. He was a terrible grind. He kept by himself too much.”

“He has the making of a scholar,” the answer came from the depths of the great beard. “I expect a great deal from a man like that, who has lots of brains to start with and pluck enough to fight his way against fearful odds. I like Bowers.”

“So do I,” cried Barbara. “The poor thing looked terribly shabby and hungry. Ask him to dinner, grandfather,” she added, with a look, half veiled by her long lashes, at Paul.

"He would n't come if I did. But it might please him. And the man in earnest is the man I wish to help and—honor. Not the other sort."

The Master fidgeted about a few minutes longer, while Paul wondered at his ill temper, who usually was so genial. Finally, when he went out of the room without a word, Paul began to perceive that something was seriously amiss. If Dr. Hare had been short with him, Barbara took some pains to vex him sadly. She talked much of Bowers.

"Does he really interest you?" Paul asked.

"Indeed he does," she answered, her eyes eloquent. "I'm so sorry that grandfather did n't present him to me. Poor thing! Think how sandy a man like that is! He's sure to succeed. Oh!" Her mood changed like a flash. "So you're going up to Ashley to-morrow?"

"I don't know. I guess so."

Barbara's smile was like another woman's delicate laughter. "I thought you had decided. The quail—"

Paul caught up his hat. "I can't grind on without a second's let up," he grumbled. "It's hard as the devil, Babbie."

"Is it?" she asked innocently. "Give my love to Peggie, if you see her."

The squires received him like a prodigal returned from very dry husks. Dick Farquhar was waiting for him at the station, with a horse that was a tonic to see and a stimulant to drive behind. There were hearty greetings from the old station-master, who used to chase him away from the freight-cars ever so long before. Mr. Brooke led him into the baggage-room to whisper his wish that he would some day come back for good.

And then the open road! Straight away from the station it stretched up the east to the flank of Sycamore Hill, a long red track. In Winter the farmers and teamsters risked their horses' knees every time they drove up or down, for the ice lingered treacherously between the banks where the road went through the little cuts, and the loose stones lay thick its whole length. In Summer the track was not much better, for only bare pasture-land and corn, or oat-fields lay on either side, so that the sun baked it dry, and every vagrant whiff of breeze whirled the red dust up in clouds. But city-dwellers preferred this old post-road to the newer, which led more directly to Ashley village. Following the latter, you begin to meet at once with "colonial" and Japanese-Gothic dwellings painted in pale greens and yellows with white trimmings, which harbor the younger and more prosperous generation of

Ashley folk, and you seem again to be back in the suburbs of Oldport. The old road, however, leads through better things.

"Which way?" asked Dick at the cross-roads.

"Up the hill, if you don't mind," Paul answered, with a quick laugh which spelled a little embarrassment.

They said no more till the mare had pushed along half-way. Dick pulled her up on a short strip of level and pointed off with his whip.

"How's that, Paul?"

"It'll do. I'm not trying to improve it."

The subtle spell of the earth was on him, and he yielded to it with a smile. Already the library was far away, the stifling lecture-rooms seemed not ever to have been. The pungency of burning leaves and stubble drifted across the road; a light haze blended into faded, rich beauty the downward slope of grass land before them and the more distant woods; the clouds floated very high; it was pleasant to feel the wind on one's temples. Meadow-larks seemed to believe that the sun was still July's.

"Good Lord!" Paul groaned, dropping back on the seat. "Get along, Dick."

"Your land starts here just to the east — by those walnuts. See?"

"Does it?" Paul came erect again, and followed eagerly the direction of the whip's pointing. "I'd no idea it came over this way so far."

"Oh, yes. It's a middling big place, young man." Dick chirruped to the mare and then looked Paul up and down. "Coming back?"

"Back?" asked Paul, listlessly. "To Ashley? The Lord knows, Dick."

"He moves in a mysterious way, the hymn says. I hope he'll perform a wonder in your case."

"*Procul este, profani,*" Paul replied. And then they both laughed when his companion said that he never learned any Greek at all.

The road was full of wonders and delights. Only six weeks before, Paul had driven down it, and thought it dusty and full of ruts. But now! Now it was the road that led to his grandfather's, just as in the old days; it was the road that the Austin place was on; it skirted the edge of the house where Babbie Hare used to be sent for the Summer. It led to ever so many pleasant places, this old hill-road.

The trap jogged along over the hill, and the mare slid down the grade. The two young men were chattering away about dozens of things, and never noticed her doings, till sud-

denly she swerved and nearly upset the cart against a post as she trotted into the Austins' yard, and stopped under the maple-trees. Dick turned scarlet.

"Let 's get out of here," he muttered, turning the mare.

"Hold on. I 've a message for Peggie."

Dick hesitated. "No, no. It would n't do. Really, Paul. Can't come twice a day, you know. Besides, Peggie 's over at the Cadwala-ders' this afternoon. Get on, Honoria."

"I can see her to-morrow, anyway," Paul replied. "Lend me Honoria in case I lose my way, boy."

"I have to be at the Austins' a good deal," said Dick, calmly. "The old man 's crazy about you and your place. When do you have to decide ?"

"It 'll be pretty soon, I guess."

And not another word did the two exchange till they had come to the farm-house that Dick and his brother had made so charming.

There was such good company assembled in the low-ceiled dining-room. Joe Farquhar had just come home from round the world by the new route, and his tales of Manchuria were matched only by those of the young forester to whose year in Canadian timber-lands had suc-

ceeded a little appointment to look over the Farquhar and Cadwalader hickories and chestnuts. And across the table were the two youngsters who had slipped away from college, and for whose absence they all promised to find excuses which would satisfy any dean in America. And, best of all, to the jolly company entered, early in the evening, Mr. Austin himself, the biggest boy of them all.

"Scoundrel!" he cried to Paul. "Why didn't you stop this afternoon? I saw you drive in."

"Dick was in command. Ask him, Mr. Austin."

"It was Honoria," Dick blurted out, while the table laughed gleefully.

Mr. Austin mixed himself some whisky and water, and a little later another. The song he trolled to the frenzied applause of the youngsters made him need a third. And then, as the little party began to melt away and return, now appearing very restless, now sitting oddly mute and stiff, while a queer haze made all the room seem just a little strange, Mr. Austin found that he was talking to Paul with extraordinary fervor. He could not quite recall how the conversation started. He guessed it was the reek of the tobacco and the garishness of the lamp-light that

urged him outdoors. Back in the dining-room the boys were singing lustily.

"That's what I wanted to see you about," said Mr. Austin, rapidly. He relighted his cigar for the third time. "You belong to us, Paul. We want you, my boy." Emotion welled up within him. "I'm getting to be an old man now—"

"Nonsense, sir!"

"I say I am. I beg you not to contradict me, Mr. Gardiner. There, there, I did n't mean it. But I *am* old, Paul. And I want to see you youngsters growing up on the good old soil before I die." His moment's cloudiness rolled from him as Mr. Austin came to the theme that lay next his heart. "Why don't you say that you will, Paul?"

"Why?"

"Yes. We think of you like the fellow in the French play—what's his name, you know. 'What the devil's he doing in *that* galley?'"

Paul sighed. "I wonder myself now and then. But it's a fine life. You can do so much good," he concluded vaguely.

"You've learned your lesson well," said Mr. Austin, with a short laugh. "I can hear both the Hares chanting Dale's praises when you talk that way."

"No, but really, Mr. Austin."

The older man got up from his chair. "Think so? Well, I won't argue with you. Just one point, though, Paul. Does Hare tell you he thinks you're cut out for academic life?"

"Yes, sir. Frankly."

"Wants you to give up the farm and all for it?"

"He says it will pay me to do so."

"Pay?" Mr. Austin hurled his burnt-out cigar far out on the lawn. "It will pay somebody a blazing good sum, that's sure." Then he turned into the house, crying out as he went, "I'm a suspicious old rascal and deserve a beating. Give Hare my love, and tell him that for me, Paul."

All the next day the lawyer's words dinned in Paul's ears. The crowd followed the forester through the wood-lots in the morning, ranging like Indians on the war-path, lunching on a bit of turf at the top of a rock ledge like Robin Hood's men, miles, one would swear, from all the rest of the world. It was a morning to drive from one's head every thought but of the outdoor world; but, though Paul tried to twist away, Mr. Austin's remarks gripped him tight. Why had the lawyer sneered at the interest Dr. Hare showed in him? Why —

"Scared? I guess I was. Do you know what those timber-wolves are like?"

The forester's glowing eyes were holding his audience close. The boys exclaimed aloud. Paul rolled over to listen better.

"Well, he held off a while, snarling away and looking ugly as the devil. I knew I had to get that gun, but it was lying a good ten feet away."

Paul lay back again. He could not listen. He wished he could get hold of Dick to ask some crafty questions. He remembered that Dick, too, had seemed to hint vaguely as they drove up the hill the day before. He wished he could make out what they were trying to tell him. Why did they seem to mistrust the Master so? Why Barbara, who loved the old man so? Was it a fault that they were trying to win for the Dale life a young man like himself?

"Good God!" cried Paul, aloud. "That's too impossible."

The forester's eyes grew smaller. "I beg your pardon, Gardiner?"

"Go on," cried the others. "Tell your story, Bill."

Paul looked at the narrator. "I was thinking of something else, McGregor. Did n't mean to interrupt."

He told Dick he would have to return to Oldport the next evening.

"But I thought you were going to stay over Sunday. Oh, come, Paul! You don't need to go back." Dick's face was full of trouble.

"Can't leave the work, Dick."

The boy broke out into a laugh. "I see. I understand. Two days is a long time. Those learned young tutors are sly rogues too. Yes, I guess you'd better hurry, Paul."

Bowers! Of course such a thing was impossible; she would not even think of him. But the quick remembrance of the scene in Dr. Hare's study stung him. He must prove to her that not Bowers himself was more in earnest. She must see him in the room when Professor Forsythe came forward.

Mr. Austin was troubled, and hoped he had n't said anything rash to send Paul back to his toil by a kind of reaction. But Dick and Peggie, driving together behind wise Honoria, guessed that they understood.

Dale's graduate students live not many of the college world know just where save the authorities and their own silent race. They are a good deal like the freshmen in this regard. The women among them cloister themselves in places ten minutes from the noise of the Campus, along

damp or dusty streets, found only by consulting the map or by asking the policeman. The men scatter about in odd corners of the city, the one or two bitten by the poetry frenzy asserting the charm of life out among the dairy- and truck-farmers, dependent on clangorous electric traction to get to lectures. A few chemists and engineers live over a laboratory; others fill up the rooms near the Campus and Commons which the freshmen do not occupy; a dozen or so win for themselves the less desirable rooms in those buildings dedicated to the use of the scholars in divinity.

Here Paul lived, in good luck he thought, protesting the delights of his fourth-story chambers to those who followed the Dale tradition of gleefully mocking the original plan and the subsequent care of the two rambling wings where the beginning preachers and teachers have to dwell.

There were long corridors to traverse; dingy, dark, low-ceiled stairs tedious to climb, where once the fire roared up, the treads worn deep again by a hundred climbers. The approach was cheerless enough, but the rooms were oddly shaped, full of afternoon sun, with fireplaces glowing from October till April.

It was quiet up there all day, nor did the night

Noises ascend, except after this or that foot-ball victory, beyond the second floor. And at these special times even the Japanese grinned from their doorways.

There were seven of these on Paul's floor, studying philosophy or economics, little silent souls, who chattered jokes at each other all day, and were reputed all princes or priests of Buddha. They made rare company of an evening, for they told long tales of queer places and queer doings where the heroes and the heroines lived by standards other than the New England, to the confusion of missionaries. Paul was counted fortunate because they came often to his room, and was himself more than pleased whenever polite little raps on his door heralded a stumpy black figure topped with a visage all intelligence and deprecatory smiles. He was much in their fellowship, and learned many things from them over pipes and a glass of something fit for cold nights. He would go far to please them.

The weeks passed along, and Paul found, though he could not tell how, if ever he asked himself the question, that route-step in the dust and the heat with the other foot-soldiers was a day's business better worth than it had seemed when he had followed paths in the cool woods, with a young morning sun to light him.

It was to his credit that he did not forget who urged him to the marching.

He went to tell her of a new league to his credit, one afternoon.

"That 's it!" she cried, with a smile that warmed like wine. From some window her ancestress must have thrown white roses at him coming back with the golden spurs. "Are n't things very nice, indeed, Paul?"

"You 'll spoil me, Babbie. You must n't call me such fine names. There 's a dozen men over yonder—a dozen? fifty—who make me feel, oh, so small and—and ignorant."

"Never mind." Her eyes smiled at him. "Keep at it a while, won't you, Paul?"

"Don't worry, miss."

"I don't," she answered, shaking her head. "I don't worry a bit. I like to tease myself, though, now and then. It 's like going to the circus when you were little. Did n't you always tell yourself that really and *truly* there was n't going to be any circus the next afternoon? But you always went, you know, afterward."

"Did we?"

"Always."

"Well, I 'm booked to be clown, then, or a sideshow of some sort, I guess," he said awkwardly enough. "Give me some more tea, please."

They were in the library, for Professor Hare liked best to have his tea in the house's dearest room. A drawing-room chilled it, he would stoutly maintain; the dining-room was obviously impossible; and in your bedroom, he concluded — for his little joke never varied — you are dressing, or you are asleep, or you are ill, in any event not fit for tea. So each afternoon for a half-hour the house's life centered around the fire in the library, where deep chairs were, and a queer Georgian sofa where Barbara sat, before her the little stand with its napery and silver. And Barbara, in her seat, with the low firelight over her, was apt to make visitors forget that Professor Hare's tea was sent him by the viceroy with the funny name.

Paul watched her jealously, as he had watched a score of times before. A score of times he had told himself that he knew her every gesture; that there was no little trick of bearing, no shade of color in cheeks or eyes, he had not wondered at. But he was surprised to find her different this afternoon; for Barbara was like a summer lake, a glint of sun, a trace of shadow, changing her beauty in a moment.

And hers was the spell of Summer, too. He had surrendered his all to its witching.

“Grandfather says — ”

He looked up quickly. "Anything new?"

"A secret. I must n't tell, Paul. He thinks you 're doing nicely, though."

She nodded at him, then laughed at his puzzlement, her eyes full of pride in her scholar.

"Listen. Here is something else to fill you with self-love. I invite you, grandfather invites you, to meet Miss Madison on Thursday. She 's coming to tea, and she 's quite a personage. Have you seen her this Winter? Oh, she 's so splendid! Her play suits her nicely. And she 's most amusing."

THE room up in Divinity Hall was crowded full, the air heavy with smoke.

"It fastened with a kind of brooch on the shoulder," the little man explained, "and was allowed to fall over the girdle in a loose fold. This photograph shows it pretty well. And see here."

He had a lay figure on a table, a gaunt thing like a woman turned soulless, and with a few turns made it assume a pose like the Diana who has the little stag bounding beside her. Then he threw about her a bit of nearly shapeless blue India silk, which he took from a pile of neatly folded pieces on a table at his side, pinned it swiftly on the figure's right shoulder, and girdled it at the waist.

The room murmured applause. It was very interesting. Here were Greek costumes being explained, the tunics and the graceful over-garments reproduced in real materials cut by patterns. The little man smiled rather helplessly under the rain of questions, lighted his chewed cigar afresh. Sometimes he took the men and women in the processions on the vases, oftenest the great statues. The stark lay figure was now a *Victrix*, now a matron, now a priest or an orator. Till the room darkened his shrill prattle went on, broken by slow questions or chorused laughter. All the afternoon it lasted, till six o'clock striking brought most of the men to their feet.

"Don't go," said the host in Paul's ear. "I want you to take dinner with Lane and me. He can talk about lots of things besides Greek costumes. Don't go yet."

Paul laughed. "Don't worry. You'll have to drive me away. He's immense."

"Professor Clement said he'd meet us there. We'll have an excellent evening. Also Karayama."

"He was not polite, my dear."

"No, sir. He was not."

"Show Mr. Gardiner in, Hannah."

He came, with many apologies. There was

no excuse to make; he could only say that he had forgotten the invitation completely, and had gone to dinner with some men. But he hoped they would forgive him. He was very sorry indeed.

He stopped rather breathlessly.

"Are n't you going to sit down?" asked the professor. "We were sorry not to have you with us. Miss Madison is quite worth special attention. A very remarkable woman as well as actress. We were very sorry. Well—"

"I *do* hope you 'll forgive me," Paul repeated, looking at Barbara.

She smiled back. "Did n't you have *any* excuse?"

He filled up the gaps in his story, telling about Lane and his wonderful models, of the good talk at dinner with quaint old Clement and placid Karayama. He did not know it, but as he talked and remembered the fullness of his day, Paul grew from the blundering boy who has been rude and wishes to clear himself to the young man whose life-work interests him as much as the world's best. His audience exchanged glances. This was a tone quite different from what they feared to hear that morning, not so long before.

"Good!" exclaimed the professor. "I 'm glad you stayed away, boy."

"I can't see how I forgot you, sir. You must n't think me altogether a boor, Babbie, please."

He was back again to his mood of contrition. His story of the afternoon and evening seemed to him no excuse at all for having forgotten the bidding of the girl he loved. He had been rude, he had slighted her, and, besides, he had thrown away the chance of two hours at her side, hearing her laughter, watching her beauty. They were glad he stayed away! He could not believe that Dr. Hare meant what he said. It was only with some kindly idea of setting him more at his ease. Paul stumbled once more through some intricate apologies.

The professor drank his tea silently, taking no further part in the conversation, which proceeded rather jerkily, until he got on his feet. Even then what he said had little enough bearing on what the children were talking about.

"See, Gardiner, I—we were really annoyed at your carelessness. I had a good scolding ready for you." Here he laid his hand on Paul's shoulder. "But it won't do to scold a scholar for spending his time with the things of his trade, will it? I'm sincerely glad you forgot us for Lane and his manikin, boy. It means a good deal—a good deal."

He left the room, without a word further.

"You see?" asked Barbara, radiantly.

"He only meant to be kind, Babbie."

"No, no. He was happy, Paul. And I'm so pleased, too."

He hesitated. "But it was inexcusable, I'm afraid."

"I don't think so, Paul." She spoke again as she had in Paris and in the days of the year's beginning, full of enthusiasm for the scholar's work, urging on this newest aspirant with all the power that was in her.

The young man listened, for he loved her when the fire in her eyes was alight. He listened, for she was pointing him the road he had best follow did he wish to reach most directly the goal he most coveted.

"A man's work well done!"

"I'll try, Babbie."

"You've begun so well, Paul." Her eyes dropped for a second, then she looked up, her color deepening a little. "I—I'm so interested in having you succeed, Paul."

"Really?"

"Of course. You're a kind of brother. I want you, and every man, to do something worth while. Dear me, I've said this so often, I bore all my male acquaintance sadly."

At night the whole scene there in the professor's library flashed up between Paul and his book. All she had said he could remember. Not long before he would have gone away from such a talk not a little weary, for Barbara had spoken to him as she spoke to a dozen others—as she spoke of Bowers. But now, though perhaps he did not know of any change, he found himself merely a companion with her on the same road. He loved her; to win her for himself seemed still his best achievement; but the battle was first to be fought, and Paul had found that his heavy sword was sweet to handle and his stubborn horse quicker to the spur than when first he stumbled on the field.

All this by way of explanation. What happened was simpler.

His pipe needed refilling, and while he stuffed the bowl full, the other man in the room asked:

“Did you make your excuses to the Hares?”

“Oh, yes. It was not easy, though.”

“Stiff, were they? Old Denny can be starchy if he wants.”

“No,” Paul replied. “They were glad I did n’t come, under the circumstances. A man’s work, you know—”

“Sure. Might have known. Lane’s a wonder. I guess Denny’d like to have seen him

too, and so would Miss Hare. They're college folks through and through."

The pipe was alight now. "Yes, they'd rather a man'd work than anything else."

"That's right." The other man lay back in his chair and thought a minute. Paul took up his book again. "Beg y' pardon. Go ahead, Gardiner. Read some more."

"All right. Shut up now, and listen."

So the day ended. So the weeks at the end of the first term passed. Barbara and her grandfather were quietly happy in Paul's new interests and success. The young man's heart beat faster when he came into the girl's presence; her smile was for him like a benediction. But once he forgot her entirely, to spend the hours which were her due with a clever Japanese of unknown antecedents and a man who knew how to dress a manikin in correct Greek costume.

V

A SEA-CHANGE

PROFESSOR HARE'S household was acknowledged noteworthy in at least one regard. It was one of the four appertaining to the college community which found a space of quiet possible directly after breakfast. The youngsters on the Faculty have to be behind their desks or on their platforms by half-past eight, which spells for them often no breakfast at all; and most of the others, so strong is tradition, feel restless and as, somehow, committing a breach of something if they delay at all on the way from the dining-room to office, or study, or laboratory. But Professor Hare held it better and quite within the limits of morality — though he agreed that the tutors and instructors could take no harm from hurrying — to spend three quarters of an hour first in thanking God for the calm night and the new day, then in learning what his friends had to tell about themselves.

The letters were arranged in two divisions. The narrow envelops, the stamped envelops, those with one-cent stamps, and those with business addresses in their corners were all stacked on his desk in the library; the others lay in the living-room, with the morning paper, to take their turn after the Bible and the Prayer-Book were put back on the shelf.

Barbara had gone away one morning to her plants, her head somewhat confused between a worry over unlucky coffee and a delight in the gospel for the third Sunday in Advent, when she heard her grandfather call.

He looked up delightedly from the letter in his hand as she ran to him.

“Any summer dresses left, Babbie?”

“I—I think so. Why?”

“And hats? And—other things?”

“It’s a missionary, I’m sure. He can’t have a thing. They’re all going down to the Settlement. Where is he?”

“In New York.”

“He can’t want summer things in December, then, surely.”

Dr. Hare caught up the letter with a big laugh that spilled ashes from his pipe. “It’s true, though. A missionary with great means of doing good writes of two worthy women—one

young, one — youngish — who will be in need of light dresses inside of a week. You 're not listening, Babbie."

"Yes, I am." She went to arrange some things on the mantel. Then she said, partly to a pewter plate, partly over her shoulder: "Perhaps I can spare something, but they need *so* much right here at home, dearest."

The professor took her in his arms. "You are a nice girl, and shall read for yourself. *Then* judge."

He waited a bit uneasily, watching the color come, then the little shadow of doubt, then, at the end, the happiness he hoped for. "A good missionary, eh, sweeting?"

"Oh," she cried, all afire in a second. "How splendid in him! Oh, I *do* want to go!"

"If you had not wanted to go," he answered, "I should have educated you in vain. It's a vacation worth talking about, honey."

So, because of this letter, and because Colonel Dudley had sent its fellows to Mrs. Tew and to Paul and three others of those who had been in Paris together the Summer before, it came to pass that Professor Hare sat down to spend his Christmas holidays all alone. And if for an hour his fire burned dull, he was content, looking out on Oldport streets, where the damp steam rose

from the dirty snow-piles to make the foggy air the heavier. For Barbara was far from it, and each half-day the beautiful big *Cavalier* was carrying her two hundred miles nearer the little island where Summer was.

And Barbara? She had looked back more than once in the first two days along the yacht's foamy wake that lay so still on the quiet sea. Yonder, off in the dark, was the life she loved so. There was the old house with its old memories, the dear duties of its perfect keeping. It was the Christmas season at the mission, which meant the shrill cheers and caroling of the children, their solemn eyes when she told them of that other Child and his coming to the world. There were the beauties and the peace of the great festival at St. Stephen's; there were, with a quick change she laughed at herself for, the good holiday times in half-a-dozen houses of the college world.

She wondered herself, and made Paul guess with her, what her grandfather was doing. Now it was time for his walk — all alone; now he was at dinner, and she hoped Dr. Wren or the president was with him. She fancied how he would meet her at the home-coming. He might be in New York — but that would be difficult to arrange. No, she would see him from the window

as the train drew into the station, so fine among the other travelers in his height and bearing and age. No, he must be at home—that would be best!—framed in the open doorway, his arms stretched out, ready to draw her in to the light and warmth.

“It would be nicest, I think,” she added slowly, savoring the sweetness she conjured up, “if it was snowing. A real Oldport winter evening, wet and very unpleasant indeed.”

“Barbara, you’re scandalously homesick.”

She kept her eyes on the yacht’s silver track across the black water. “Coming home is one of the best parts of going away. Don’t you think so?”

He made no answer.

She laid her hand on his black sleeve. “Forgive me, Paul. I was very careless.”

“I shall have a home some day again,” he replied steadily, then turned to her, who was looking off again into the dark, and added rather huskily: “At least I hope so, Babbie. I dream sometimes.”

“Of course you will. Shall we talk about it?” she laughed. “I’m a fine planner.”

“It’s too far away yet,” said Paul. He felt the deep of his heart speak in the voice he tried to make steady.

She nodded. "Of course. Your work's not finished."

"No," he repeated slowly, letting his eyes embrace her. "My work is yet to do, I'm afraid."

"Well begun," she murmured, tracing patterns on the rail, "is—"

She turned and stepped forward. "In the meantime," she went on, with a swift change of tone, "until we get home let's have the best time we possibly can. I'm going on the bridge. Want to come?"

"Not now, I guess." A black mood was on him. "The colonel does n't like too many there at once. I shall smoke, and, if I can find a companion, I shall probably drink. *C'est l'heure des balles-hautes.*"

"Oh, very well," said Barbara, finely indifferent. "Just as you like."

On the bridge Colonel Dudley received her joyously, and he beamed upon her more broadly still when Barbara told him how much she was enjoying the trip.

"I'm ever so glad," he said heartily. "And we're all mighty glad you could come, Barbara."

She made no answer, but followed him to the end of the bridge, and stood looking out across the quiet water. She was passionately fond of

the sea. The mountains oppressed her, made her feel prisoned. If she was ever very happy away from the quiet and serenity of the old coast town, it was as now, when the salt lay on her lips, and all around her stretched the ocean's mystery and restless freedom. It spoke to her in a language she could understand when it roared aloud, throwing itself headlong on the beach before the last of the gale, or on this night when it breathed lightly its message to her, half a slumber-song, half a fairy-story.

The colonel was saying something, so she made herself listen.

"Paul? Yes, indeed."

The colonel went on. "A fine boy. His father over again, it seems to me. And good blood behind him. He's studying something, is n't he?"

She explained rapidly what Paul was doing, and how her grandfather was delighted at his progress.

"Humph!" said the colonel. "Going to be a professor, eh?"

"Something like it, sir."

"Well, everybody to his taste. He's got the right stuff in him, though."

She listened rather idly, for the spell of the sea bound her. Then, all of a sudden, Barbara's

whole being stood still to listen; for something, perhaps the good old soldier's tone, had brought to her a question she never dreamed could be asked her. She felt herself go pale and red.

"It's a pity there's so much fog," said Barbara, sedately. She gave herself up again to the sea; the shadow had lingered between her and the waves only a breathing-time. The night's wonder held her, and the solitude. The yacht was invisible except for the squares of light which marked the skylights. The bridge was empty except for a restless officer and the motionless quartermaster at the wheel.

"We may run in and out of it all right," said Colonel Dudley, in answer to her question. "I hope the whistle won't disturb you, if they have to use it."

She laughed. "Never fear." A sailor tumbled up the ladder, and made toward the belfry at the after end of the little deck which joined the bridge. "May I ring it?" asked Barbara.

The man gave place, a good deal astonished, as she took the bell-cord from his hand.

"Now?" she asked, almost whispering.

The colonel held his watch to the binnacle-lamp, then nodded. "Six, you know," he said. "It's eleven o'clock."

The three double strokes floated out over the

boat. The lookout's cry came back from the bow.

"All 's we-el-l!"

"It 's as though the *Cavalier* was saying good night," she murmured. "Good night to its friends out there in the other rooms beyond the curtains." Then she looked out into the blackness ahead, beyond the easy rise and fall of the bow. "It 's almost like a good-by, I think."

"A boat 's like a singer, then, Barbara. She says farewell pretty often."

"No, but *really*." She laughed in the next minute. "I think it 's too solemn up here in the dark. I 'm going below, Colonel, please. Good night, Mr. Benton."

The officer whirled about. "Good night, Miss. You took your watch finely."

The magic of the water and of the dark night thrilled her through. She lay long awake in her berth, tasting new delights in feeling stir in her heart a response to the stealthy chuckle of the water as it flew past,—an understanding, as it seemed to her, of the steady, quiet song of the engines. She was glad Mrs. Tew was asleep, or at least made no sound. It was sweet to be alone with the sea, to make a friend of the yacht by harkening to its voices, to fall asleep with the silver echo of the bell dinging lightly in her ears.

She lay long between awake and asleep, thrilling with sensation. The half-hour on the bridge had worked strangely upon her. There was a kind of spiritual intoxication in the air which now filled her mind with the oddest fancies, now lifted her almost to weeping, just as when she felt the wonder of a Russian mass, in the next moment warming her heart with the love of her dear grandfather newly roused into flame. She was near laughter, then tears. Usually reigning her feelings close, to-night she gave them their heads and enjoyed to the full the mad race they led her. She was sorry for her grandaunt sound asleep in the other berth ; she thought with horror of the dull nights and duller days that world passes which fears a dream only less than a new sensation.

Once she was on the point of dressing to go again on deck. It would be beautiful up there. She planned how she could manage an escape from Mrs. Tew, who would surely forbid her if she woke up. Then, propping herself on her elbow so as to look out the port-hole, she painted a picture of the night's quiet, of the ocean's talking to her if she leaned to listen, of the wonder that lay always just beyond the bow.

A little drowsiness stole over her and she lay down again. After all, the fog would make

things very damp and cold on deck ; she would feel dreary enough all the next day if she stayed awake all night; one sunrise was not very different from another. She was so warm and comfortable where she was. She burrowed deeper among the fleecy blankets and soft pillow. A great sigh set her fancies flying, like leaves down the street, down along the high limestone walls which bounded the château grounds. This October was even fairer than year in Touraine than June had been. Her grandfather was telling her how it was in '70.

Her dream went on. They were in Paris; Paul was there, walking down the Boulevard St. Germain; and then they were traveling somewhere. It was in a railway station, and Paul was helping her escape from her aunt.

"I shall have a home some day — when my work is done."

"He has good stuff in him," Colonel Dudley whispered.

The train was just carrying them out; she saw the advertisements of French seaside resorts pass them on the walls of the station, when her aunt broke away from Colonel Dudley's arm.

"Babbie!" screamed Mrs. Tew. "Babbie!"

The train turned half over; there rose a sound of crashing timber and grating metal all about

them, with water coming in below and above. Then through the confusion and the dark she heard Paul shouting and pounding desperately on the door.

"On deck!" he cried, his voice hard and fierce. "It's a collision. Quick, Babbie! Open that door!"

Barbara leaped from her berth. Her heart's beating pained her.

"Wait, wait!" wailed Mrs. Tew. "Where are my clothes?"

The electric light, when at last they found the button, would not work, so they groped in darkness for the clothes-hooks, their fingers fluttering at the buttonholes.

"The life-preservers are under your berth, auntie. Let me look."

A strange courage took hold of the girl. Her aunt was very helpless and old.

"O Babbie!"

"For God's sake come out! They're getting the boats away. You have n't time for anything."

"Yes, Paul, yes."

They found the bolt, shot it back, jerked at the door-knob. The door held fast.

"Paul!" Barbara cried, tugging with all her might. "Help us! The door's—"

The panels cracked as he laid his weight to them, but one of the deck-beams,—some overhead timber, anyway,—broken or sagging, jammed tight against the upper part of the door. It yielded not more than an inch under the push of the broad shoulders.

“Stand back!” yelled Paul. “Get one side. I’ll break it in! The hinges ’ll give.”

There was a second’s pause, then some great weight crashed against the panels. Again it came, and again. They heard his quick breathing, and remembered the heavy steamer-trunk that stood in the little vestibule. Blow after blow. The door was cracked in a dozen places, the frame had started, then in the darkness the whole partition wall seemed to give, and the screws sprang from the hinges.

“Now!” he whispered, dragging them through the wrecked doorway. “Hurry!”

The sloping, heaving deck was wet with fog and very quiet. Out in the blackness were vague shoutings, and the thousand lights of some big steamer glowed palely. Life was yonder; but on the yacht fore and aft was no sound but the rush and drip of water, and the roar of steam in the escape-pipe. The davits were bare of boats, the falls swinging wildly to the plunging of the short seas.

"Where are the people?" asked Barbara.
"O Paul, I—"

"They must have thought everybody was gone. Some cursed blunder in the fog and the dark. I'll get 'em back," he panted. "Wait here."

They clustered aft, clinging to the extra steering-gear, the women crouching low, for it was near impossible to keep one's footing on the deck, so sharp was its angle. Mrs. Tew drew back with a moan like a woman in physical pain as she caught sight of the black water; she sobbed wildly in the embrace of her niece's strong young arm.

"Not death!" she babbled over and over.
"Not death, my God!"

"They'll come back; they must come back in a minute, Aunt Augusta. Wrap that closer about your throat."

"Boat ahoy!" yelled Paul through his hollowed hands.

The steamer lights mocked him. To call through the fog was like calling through wool. The old woman behind was begging piteously. It was hours that he stood there waiting an answer. Suddenly he whirled around.

"Stay there!" he ordered. "Don't jump. Keep her quiet, Babbie. There's a minute or so yet, I guess."

"What are you going to do, Paul?"

"The whistle," he answered, over his shoulder.
"It may work still."

He dodged forward, clinging to the rail, ragging when a sick lurch of the sinking yacht threw him down. He was dizzy from a blow on the head from somewhere; his fingers were sticky with blood. The cold seemed to turn him to stone. He could hardly make a footing on the narrow ladder to the bridge; but he hung on. One day he had seen the quartermaster answer the hail of a tramp steamer, and now Paul blessed the chance that had taken him that day to the bridge, for he laid his hand on the cord's end at his first moment's search. He prayed wildly as he jerked at it.

After a silent rush of steam there sounded a choked scream from above and behind. It was the yacht's death-rattle — a series of horrid quick shrieks, a yell for help, too, if ever one was sent across the water. And along with the whistle's scream Barbara heard the swift clanging of the bell.

"That's its real good-by," she thought, the memory of her own clear, quiet chime rushing over her. "It was only good night before. That will bring them back," she added aloud, hugging Mrs. Tew.

But she seemed only vaguely to be afraid. She would tell herself of the black and the chill of the water, of the distance to the boats, and repeat that any second the yacht might dive. She tried to pray. For a moment she stopped breathing when the thought came of her grandfather, of the fair home world. She wept with them in their sorrow, as often before. But she could not think of death as for her. Death was a thing for old people,—her grandmother, Uncle Henry,—or for little children in the crowded tenements she knew so well. Death meant a white bed and a quiet-eyed nurse to tell of its presence, the priest's monotone, and the scent of honeysuckle borne into the sick-room; or it meant a slatternly mother's keening mingled with hurdy-gurdy music from the dirty, hot street below. The silent sea did not spell death, only mystery and a terror like the beautiful lightning's.

She soothed her aunt as she might hearten a child scared by hobgoblins.

The yacht sank lower still; the tops of the higher waves washed back and forth across her streaming planking. There was no life in her plunges. She used to curtsey to the seas; now she lowered her head as they rolled toward her, sagging deep into the hollows, only a little left of her old trick of recovery. She had grown old

and tired in a moment. Barbara felt a swift, fantastic pity for the beautiful creature in her pain. She was a bright white bird with a wound in her stainless side.

"We must jump, Barbara," said Paul, coming back to them. "We—"

"Help me! I can't stand it here." Mrs. Tew staggered to her feet, and fought to get to the rail. But the young man caught her.

"Get that life-preserved on right," he ordered. "It'll drown you if it slips down. You must! Fix it, Babbie, while I hold her. It's a chance. Now your own. That knot safe?"

"Where's yours, Paul?"

"Don't want any. I'm all right. Ready now?"

"God bless you, dears," sobbed the older woman, in Barbara's arms. "I hoped—I did n't think to die this way. I hoped you'd—"

"'T is n't good-by yet, auntie."

"Oh, the water, the water! Help!" she shrieked. "Help, help, help! Oh, hold me, Babbie. Please don't leave me, dear."

"Stop that noise!" Paul darted again to the rail and clambered up, clinging to a stanchion. "Ahoy!" he yelled. "Quick, for the love o' God!" Then he looked back, and, struck quiet by the command in his gesture, the women

heard out in the fog the thudding of rowlocks and the splash of oars.

The boat wallowed alongside. It was the dinghy, very light and small, but its gunwale was nearly of a height with the yacht's sheer-strake.

"I can't go," wailed Mrs. Tew, shrinking back. "It's not safe."

"Barbara!"

"When aunt's in, Paul!" Her eyes met his resolutely.

Half carrying, half supporting, they struggled with Mrs. Tew to the side, and hoisted her over. Her screams deafened them. A pair of strong arms tore her from her crazy grip on the rail.

The girl scrambled up, faced about, and jumped down lightly as the dinghy rose to a wave.

"Splendid!" said Colonel Dudley, from the stern-sheets. "God, that was close! I thought you were with Benton."

Looking back and up from where she was huddled between the knees of the big Swede who was pulling bow, Barbara saw that suddenly and slowly the stern of the yacht was rising. It was a yard higher than at first when her thought was finished. There was no need to ask questions.

"Paul, Paul!" she called, wringing her hands.
"Jump, sir!"

Paul leaped, not into the dinghy, but back to the deck.

"There's a man here," he cried, darting back to the rail. "Stand by, sir. I'll get him."

Colonel Dudley uttered a great curse. "Damn him, he's brave!" Then he shouted, as the yacht's stern went higher, "Back water there! Lift her, boys!"

Barbara shut her eyes. He had saved them; now they left him while he fought for some other's life. She tried to speak, but she was struck dumb, looking blankly from Colonel Dudley back to the yacht, then up into the broad face of the honest Swede.

"We pick 'im up. O-oh, yass," the latter said, easing his push on the oars when they were safely away from the great hull's downward plunge.

It had been the terrible shriek of a man in agony or in terror that checked Paul at the point of jumping down into the dinghy. It seemed to come from the cabin companionway, and thither he made his way.

Down in the dark at the stairway's foot he perceived a crumpled figure, and as he looked in he was sickened by the horror of the man's screaming. It was one of the cooks.

The water washed back and forth on the cabin floor, but where before a tangle of things had been clattering from port to starboard and back, now all was quietly afloat. Only the lapping and gurgle remained. The easy stairs now stood nearly perpendicular.

"Up with you!" ordered Paul.

"My leg's broke. Ye'll have to help me, sir. I'll never make it."

They made shift to struggle nearly to the top, the man hopping on his sound leg as he hauled on the stair-rail, Paul supporting and pushing from behind.

Then, just as the deck came into sight, they were nearly borne back to the prisoning cabin by a hungry, silent rush of water that poured down on them.

The vague dawn broke grayly across the leaden sea, still sullen after sacrifice. On the steamer, which lay motionless and silent save for an occasional blast of its heavy whistle, the passengers talked soberly in little knots along the rail, peering out into the fog, which still lay low on the water, hiding the place where the disaster had happened. Forward the crew told over again their long stories of North Atlantic weather, when snow takes the fog's place, when men turn to ice before their battle against the sea's clutch is fairly begun. On

the bridge the officers asked each other how long they guessed the Old Man would wait.

"All day, if he wants to. He's all right with the firm. *He* don't have to make his time."

"Hear the reward Dudley offered?"

"I sh'd say so. Five thousand. He's all right."

"He's got his own men out, too. And he borrowed Number Six and a boat's crew before the Old Man knew where he was standing. Say, but it's a shame that *Cavalier*'s gone!"

"She was a dandy. Clyde-built?"

"Oh, no. Straight Yankee all through. Seventeen knots, they say."

"How many missing?"

"Two. Some lubber's mistake in the fog and the dark. One went back after another, 'n' they got caught as she dove. They'll never get 'em."

"No, I guess not. Waste time, I call it."

So the people on the steamer, after finding that the *Delaware* had taken no damage other than some dented plates and a section of bulwark torn away.

Out in the fog the boats pulled about here and there, the men at the oars looking everywhere but at the back of the man ahead. There were two of the yacht's, two of the steamer's. And in

one of the latter, sleepless, fierce, and silent in his grief, Colonel Dudley stood at the steering-oar.

He had changed in an hour to the captain who fought off the pirates the day the *Cavalier's* engines broke down in that Eastern sea. His orders only one had defied. And she crouched now in the bow of his boat, white and tense, looking out for the man who had saved her life.

"I *will* go," she had said. "Take your hand away, sir."

"I forbid it, Barbara."

"He saved my life."

They were at the top of the rope ladder which swayed perilously down the *Delaware's* side to the boat tossing beneath. She waited till the colonel looked away to answer some one's question, then the sailors cheered her as she clambered down, and caught her in rapturously. The colonel descended later.

For three hours they searched in ever-widening circles, following each bit of distant wreckage, hailing one another only to get sad answers. The fog bewildered; the *Delaware's* grunting whistle sounded north when it should have been east; they kept finding the same box or settee over and over. The sun showed high through clouds like thin ice. The men lightened their pull in sullen defiance of the colonel's whipping words.

Barbara lowered the glass they had given her, then raised it again. The colonel followed her gaze listlessly.

"Starboard!" she said quietly. But a second later fairly screamed and half rose to her feet.

"There — there! O Paul!"

"Pull, damn you!" roared the colonel. "Pull, men, pull! One! Two! Three! Four!"

Paul's eyes were closed when they shot alongside. He was on his back, only a bloodless face showing. The men to starboard unshipped their oars with a clatter, those to port leaned far outboard to balance the boat as the heavy weight came up over the side.

The girl in the bow covered her eyes. She heard the colonel's voice give some order, make some querulous demand. She caught a whiff of brandy.

Number One man looked at her over his shoulder as he dropped his oar in the row-lock again. "'T is you he 'll thank the morn, Miss."

She drew a long sigh. "Then — then he —"

"He 's no' reegid, Miss, at least, I 'm thankfu' to say. An' doctor 's grand at the resuscitation."

Early March was over the land. The snow remained only in the hollows and the shady places; each afternoon for an hour or so the wind was

southerly; at noon the sun was warm on the rocks. The roads dried.

The college lay in the light grasp of the spring weariness, which turns the nerves to quivering harp-strings, the brain to porridge. It is the trying season; the end of a long stretch of steady work from Christmas on; the time when the yoke begins to gall.

Paul felt he must be outdoors again. His mates laughed at him, telling him he was lazy, warning him that the traveling fellowship would slip through his fingers. He knew he did wrong to miss so many work-hours. But the afternoons were bright now. One could not stoop over a desk all day long. He missed the training of those former seasons when he was trying for the crew; his big muscles ached for stretching.

On some days Barbara went along with him.

They would climb the foot-paths to the top of the mountain; they would range across the drying meadow-land; they would follow the turnpikes up hill and down, east and west, returning by electric car after the sun was gone. And the days were happier because they knew perfectly well, both of them, that their good times were stolen.

"I feel very guilty," Barbara explained one day. "You ought not to have come, Paul."

"I can sit up later to-night, then."

"No, but *really*."

"Well?"

"Well—I don't know. I feel responsible for your behavior," you see. You are my charge. Behold the scholard! Started in his career by B. Hare, Spinster of Arts."

"That's true enough. I owe you a lot, Babbie."

She walked on ten steps silently before she looked at him again. "Mine's the biggest debt, Paul."

She puzzled him always. "How do you mean?"

"Don't you remember? Think, Paul."

"Oh, that! Don't be silly, Babbie," said Paul, fretfully. "Anyway, I guess our accounts are about even on that score. I know who got me picked up, you see. Look out now, let me go ahead down here. It's slippery still on those stones. Let me take your hand."

They were coming down the steepest part of the narrow trail which zigzagged across the bare face of the mountain. One has to take care, for even in Summer the loose stones roll treacherously under foot, and in frosty times little patches of ice, just big enough to slip on, lurk in the smooth places. She said no word, but extended her hand.

"Steady, now," said Paul.

The tone carried her back in a flash. She was on that deck again, hearing his orders so coolly given. She was obeying him once more, blindly surrendering her own judgment to his, just because he was big and strong. She asked herself a dozen whirling questions as they crept down the path. Then, knowing that a kind of defiance was in her breast, she leaned all her weight on his arm. She did not choose to answer her questions.

"Hold me tight, Paul." There was a light in her brown eyes that contradicted the mockery of their laughter over his silly answer.

A man who was lying in the sun on a ledge of rock in the shelter of some great boulders raised his head as they came by, and the next second scrambled to his feet to bow a reply to Paul's greeting. They had come out on the main mountain road now.

"Who 's that?" asked Barbara. "I did n't quite see."

"That 's Bowers," he replied. "I 'm glad he 's taking a day off too, by Jove. My hated rival, Babbie."

"Is he? A rival!" She looked at Paul, seeming to challenge the world for him. "Your rival!"

He told her all about the man's life. He went over all the sacrifices that the world knew of, all the struggles to keep a coat on his back. He had seen his room and the place where he ate, Paul said.

"And what 's it all worth?" she demanded excitedly.

"He 'll go West, most likely. Instructor or something."

"And he gives up a life for it! He 's not a man any longer, Paul. He 's just a machine-thing, or will be. It 's wicked, I think, for him to sacrifice so much." She spoke more quickly than her habit. "A young man's youth and—and manhood ought n't to be thrown aside. He ought to have a chance to enjoy it—to the full, I think. Learning does n't pay at the price poor what 's-his-name gives for it."

"It 's worth a good deal, Babbie."

It angered her to see the calm in his face. What he said was like ice round her heart. He was looking beyond her.

"How much, Paul?" She spoke straight at him, her breast heaving. Had he learned the lesson she taught him so well? She hated herself just then.

"A good deal, Babbie. Almost everything, if it 's the right kind."

"Everything?"

He laughed back at her earnestness, puzzled again, vaguely pleased. "You'll make me into a wrestler next, Bab. You're a kind of primitive, I think, after all."

A wrestler! She had seen them in marble, tense, ribbed with muscles, locked tight. Then oddly mingling with her recollection, there swept over her the feeling that the Spring bore on its wings. There was youth in the sky, in the unbound brook racing by the roadside. Strength was here, and the beauty of the world. It was where the gods were, and the thought, new found, thrilled her.

"Shall we go on?" he asked. She had stopped to look off westward into the flame of the sunset.

"It is so splendid!" she murmured. Her eyes lingered a second on his height and the breadth of his shoulders. "It is so simple and — and big, Paul!"

"Pagan too!" he exclaimed. "I never guessed it."

"Did n't you?" The new spirit that was in her blood seemed always to have guided her. The university, the city, the life she had always led, seemed put off like a garment, or she thought she had gone blindfold all her days. She could

not tell. Before this hour, she had been one thing; now a change had come. Yet somehow it was as though only with the change had she begun to live. Her mind whirled. "I 've always been an outdoor creature," said Barbara, slowly.

"Really?" He eyed her doubtfully. "Not a bit. You 're work and usefulness incarnate, as a matter of fact."

She stretched out her arms to the air and the young spring sky. "Then let me learn to be something else." Her eyes were near fright. "I must, Paul. Let 's stay young always. Let 's be strong and beautiful and happy. Let 's forget the books." Her look came back and dwelt on him. "But you are so already."

He laughed. "See how curious this is, Babbie. You taught me to work, to learn, to grow wise in dead lore, and—"

"But don't go too far, Paul."

He took both her hands. "You don't mean that, really. Let 's both make life very full, Babbie, just as we 've agreed a dozen times. I must go on, I must grow a scholar, I must drink the cup dry. Is n't that best? To succeed? To round out the circle?"

"And you must help *me*," she replied. She could not tell him what she had in her heart.

She could not tell what the memory of his man's simple courage and strength, as it showed that night on the yacht, meant. She had never seen it before then. "My life must be full too, Paul."

They broke from each other with another laugh.

"Hurrah for book-learning!" cried Paul.

"Hurrah for outdoors and—and things that are n't dry-as-dust!" cried the girl.

"Hurrah for her who started me the way I should go!"

She hesitated. Then she left him puzzled once more. Never a girl spoke so many riddles.

"Hurrah for the *Cavalier!*!" shouted Barbara to the spring wind.

VI

THE NIGHT-WATCHMAN

BOWERS did not stir for an hour after Paul and Barbara had passed his lair. So long as there was any warmth in the low sun, he remained in his place. It was his first free afternoon in a long while, and he clung to the pleasure of it almost fiercely. Until the very last minute of daylight he told himself that he would stay out, so as to let his mind—he knew how hot and tired it was—go to sleep, while his senses, all of them he said quite recklessly, should have their hour of delight. He had planned it all very carefully. It was with the extreme of self-consciousness that he arranged his surrender to the feel of the light wind in his face, the warming sun on his shoulders, the odor of the pines and the softness of the needles spread thick underfoot. To enjoy these things, to experience, as he told himself, sheer sensuous pleasure, was a part of every man's necessities. He prescribed

outdoors for his disease as a physician might have prescribed it. And because he felt it so essential, Bowers lingered until sundown where the things of the university were far from sight and hearing. There was that which was not a little sad in his attitude, another might say.

Until five years before he had grown as much a thing of the fields and the free air as any creature on the farm. Then came the exchange to the hours in the library and in the class-rooms, evenings in this or that *Seminar*, where one ascends to the heights and finds the air hard to breathe; the companionship of the great book-men, and the terrible effort to grasp and codify and use for one's own purpose what they have thought and said,—that change that spells revolution for the mind and reigns of terror. He was not yet five and twenty, but looked on the green world as a cure-resort.

All the afternoon Bowers lay still, fighting to enjoy. By flashes he was able to understand what the earth-things were saying; for five minutes at a time he could lie in the fragrant pine-needles, stretching luxuriously, breathing lightly the air, happy enough in his warmth and comfort. Then his other half would wake, myths of the nature-gods would be rehearsed, bits of half-remembered Pan poems would come in to mad-

den, he would speculate about the savage mind, he would try to recall the points of the article on the Greek attitude toward nature in modern verse.

"But this is n't resting!" he cried aloud savagely at such interruptions. "This is n't what I came out for."

He longed for the day to endure. With every fresh minute he found more things to love again, more sounds he recognized. But then came Paul and Barbara striding past him, with a run down the hill, and after them remained only thoughts again.

This Gardiner now, who was being so talked of!

It was nearly dark when he came again into town. The electric lights flashed alive as he turned into the first of the city streets. He had to hurry, for he was due at the boarding-house at a quarter of six, and the two houses where he took care of the furnaces were half a mile apart. Here he groped his way into the cellars, not daring to answer the shrill scurribilities of the Irish and the negro cooks lest in the morning they complain of him to his employers. There were clumsy shovelfuls of coal to lift, the ashes to rake down and sift, the heavy iron barrels of cinders to drag outdoors and range along the walk to the curb for the collectors in the morning.

The dust choked him, he scraped his knuckles trundling his barrel through a narrow door. In the half-darkness he knocked his head smartly against one of the furnace-pipes.

There were three other poor students who, like himself, earned their food at an eating-house by waiting on the student-boarders. These Bowers found already on hand when he came, clumsily tying on their long aprons and straightening the knives and forks on the various tables. He nodded a greeting, and snatched down his apron from the nail it hung on.

"I hate these things," he growled. "I—"

"They are in the way sometimes," one of the others replied, a thin little man, whose fearful eyes apologized for the smile that was forever on his white lips. "I nearly tripped over mine, till I got onto the way of pinning it up. See?"

Bowers laughed unpleasantly. "It's a wonder she does n't make us wear jackets and low-cut vests, like the niggers over at commons. We'd look more like real waiters then. You lack the true air, Patton, with that sweater on."

"It would n't do to make us dress like genuine waiters. It has n't ever been the custom, you know." The third of the men Bowers came upon said this. "It would mark out the student-waiters like servants, but—"

"But this is a democratic institution," Bowers sneered back, breaking in on the other's placid utterance. "This is the place where rich and poor are on an equal footing, where not the slightest distinctions are tolerated for a second, where poverty means honor at the hands of one's fellows. Certainly. The student-waiter is the leading man in college. Honor him, gentlemen. Don't mark him as occupying a menial position, for nobody in all the university considers him in that light." He looked up with a haggard smile from the row of plates he was setting. "You believe that, don't you?"

"That's what the after-dinner speakers all say," replied Patton, still smiling weakly.

"I believe in our democracy, by God," the last of the men said. "And I believe in just what we're doing here. It's all *right*. And some day we're going to win out the easier for the training."

"I wish you joy," Bowers answered. "Personally, I'm not altogether sorry to get through wearing an apron."

"This *is* your last year, is n't it?"

"Hope so. Next year it'll be different—under Heaven."

"Prayer will do you good, Bowers. But I guess you'll get your fellowship in any case."

"I've got Gardiner to buck against, I'm afraid." The thoughts of the previous hour rushed over him again.

"He's only in his first year, though—of graduate work."

Again the savage smile flared across the man's dark face. "He's a pet of old Hare's, my dear sir. And pull, even in this home of equality—"

"Oh! Steady, Bowers!"

"You don't mean that, I guess," said McAvoy, chokingly. His dark eyes were very serious as he looked for a second into Bowers's face. Then he added smoothly: "Did any of you men hear the Frenchman lecture this afternoon? They say he was pretty bad."

The storm passed. Or, if any hint of thunders and lightnings remained, they were hid away in dark places where only Bowers knew of and suffered them. For five minutes the men talked about indifferent topics, but swiftly, eagerly, as strung always to the highest tension. There was a shrillness in their gaiety which jarred with the dead, leaden quiet that came between each fit of animation. They were quick to the spur, but when for a second or so they did not feel the roweling they stood fast.

Then six o'clock struck, and they scattered to the four long tables, which were spread each in a

separate room of the dingy old house. And then the students came pouring in, full of talk about baseball practice mainly, cruel hard in their teasing, the seniors in one room sternly curbing any excess of noise from the ill-lighted den where the freshmen club threw baked potatoes at one another in the intervals of eating.

For a half-hour Bowers hurried between the steaming kitchen and his table full of hungry boys. Fifteen minutes he took in clearing away the dirty dishes and carrying them to the negro woman by the sink and suds. His clothes were full of the odor of fried and broiled. The greasy scent of food, the heavy, stale reek from twenty pipe-dottels and ends of cigarettes poisoned the air. He could not eat. He gulped down a glass of milk and a piece of sweet baker's cake, only because his fellow-waiters were going through the form of supper, and made a place for him at their little side-table.

There was a heaviness about and in his head, which kept him silent for the most part of the time he sat there. He heard their talk — man's talk it was, too — as from far off. He amused himself dully by imagining his companions to be at the other end of a telephone. He came to, the fires were lit again in his eyes only when the chimes on the college chapel-tower beat out

the three-quarter hour, and the other men rose. They were for the concert.

“Coming, Bowers?”

He shook his head, fighting not to show his disappointment. “I can’t, I’m afraid. I’ve some work to do still. My evenings are pretty full just now.”

“Better skip it to-night.”

“Can’t do it, Mac. Some other time. See you in the morning.”

“Surely. Good night.”

“Good night.”

Down in that part of the city where at all times one catches the scent of the harbor in the air, and is surprised to see now and then masts and shrouds over a roof lower than its neighbors, where from five o’clock till five o’clock heavy wagons roar along the cobbles, where sweaty porters dodge along the sidewalks with laden trucks and foot-passengers are greatly in terror,—here on a corner stood a warehouse, browned by smoke and weather, four stories high.

It was not easily to be distinguished from others all about it, for as new ideas in office-building had penetrated only into the retail and banking quarters, the stores and business housings in the harbor district remained unchanged, the same square brick boxes, stone-trimmed,

which the simple taste of two generations ago found suitable and convenient. True, the place boasted that certain air of antiquity which people other than business men are apt to confuse with stability. There was a long, narrow board across its front, from which the paint and lettering had mostly faded ; but from two shining brass signs on the sides of the main entrance, which in a way seemed to have inherited the character of their veteran predecessor, so simple were they and sober, one learned that here abode the firm of

WARDWELL & SONS

WOOL DEALERS

The corner that the warehouse stood on was one of the city's busiest. The stranger crossing the street just there felt nearer death than at any other place from the harbor to the countryside. There was a wholesale grocery establishment directly over the way, an agency for a Chicago packing-house next door, diagonally across a firm of carters and house-movers kept big trucks and clumsy horses always coming and going. A great many things happened before its doors, but the Wardwell building seemed to hold a little aloof from the bustle and noise. Its neighbors employed scores of quick clerks and

broad-shouldered porters, but there were needed to handle the Wardwell accounts and the Wardwell wool-bales only Mr. Parks and Mr. Case, Bill and Mike. The firm was one of the city's best known, but it preferred old to new ways.

It was because he himself had been the Wardwells' clerk for thirty-three years that Mr. Parks found it hard to allow any virtue in the young in places of trust; it was because he had never been over two minutes late at his work, save when the blizzard of 1888 blockaded him, in all the years of his service, that he smiled very sourly and narrowed his eyes in reply to the night-watchman's greeting when the latter reported for duty six and a half minutes after his hour.

"Late, I see," remarked Mr. Parks, preparing to get into his coat.

"I was delayed over some work, sir," the other replied. He carried a bundle of books under his arm, which he laid carefully on a desk, then took the key which Mr. Parks brought out from the great safe.

"Lock up tight," the old clerk went on, shooting the bolt of the safe and spinning the knob about. His eyes smiled up over his shoulder at the watchman. "Can't guess *this* combination, sonny, can you?"

"12—7½—3½. First turn to right." The watchman was cool under the taunt in his elder's look. "You should n't be so elaborate in your way of opening it in the morning, Mr. Parks. It was easy to guess. It 's so old-fashioned, you know."

The old clerk drew away a couple of steps, then wheeled sharply and came close to the other. "There 's all the cash in it, and some negotiable paper. And how much it comes to, I know exactly."

"Oh, do you? That 's very nice. I suppose you 'll think it necessary to count it in the morning again?"

"Young blood, young blood," growled Mr. Parks. He seemed to be merely repeating a formula, at a loss for any real rejoinder; but he conveyed a broad hint of his meaning in every syllable of what he ground out. He drove his point home. "A college student!" Mr. Parks added. "Ah!"

Left alone, Bowers made a tour of the dark, quiet place, scaring the rats in the lofts with the glare of his electric bull's-eye, those in the cellar with his noise in the coal-bins and at the furnaces. There were the iron shutters to be swung in and bolted, and, a task more tedious than any other, as it seemed, the stained blue blotters on

the desks to be renewed and the ink-wells cleaned and filled, the waste-paper baskets to be emptied. It was more than an hour before he could open his book and his notes and bend down to what he had waited to do. He was dirty and thirsty, the cuts on his rough hands ached, the sweat on his forehead and eyelids dimmed his spectacles and reddened his eyes, but he could not leave off. The morning recitation had to be mastered, the extra reading gone through with. And, too, one loves to read when you can fill out from your own store of culture the writer's allusions. It is a pleasure to take up his challenges. It was not much to have waited, for the enjoyment was the fuller when he came to it. One could see the beauty in the fellow's face after he had sat an hour over his desk. He was smiling as those smile who see visions sweet and dear when he wrapped himself in the blanket left for him, and stretched along one of the great bales of wool, with his folded coat for pillow.

He had been coming to and going from this night duty for several weeks before anything happened out of the common. To arrive at seven, to make a round every two hours till six in the morning, to hurry up-town for breakfast at the eating-house, was a program with Bowers that never varied. But, as always, the unex-

pected finally took place. Arriving one evening a little earlier than usual, he found the lights in the office still glowing brightly, and Mr. Parks still in his alpaca working-coat.

"Glad you came," growled the bookkeeper. "I could n't bother with 'em any longer."

"Who are they?"

"A rich young man and a handsome girl. You 'll see. They 're friends of yours, most likely."

"Where are they now?"

"Up-stairs," the old clerk snapped over his shoulder. "Look after 'em, will you? Ah, here they come. Where 's my hat?"

Bowers turned from Mr. Parks in bewilderment, and laid his books on a desk just as the door that led to the staircase was pushed open. There came a girl's laugh from the darkness of the stairs, and the next second Paul entered with Barbara close behind him. They did not see Bowers till he moved toward them.

"Hello!" cried Paul. "What are you doing here? So early, that is?"

"What are you, for that matter? I 'm the night-watchman."

"The man who guards my treasure! Miss Hare, may I present Mr. Bowers?"

"Yes, indeed." She came forward before he

could think, and shook Bowers's dirty big hand. "I've seen you ever so often. And my grandfather's spoken of you, too. Mr. Bowers hardly needs to be presented, Paul."

The watchman was looking at Paul. "Your treasures? How? I thought—"

"He is Wardwell & Sons," cried Barbara, with a fine gesture. "He brought me in to see his fleeces. He's very lordly."

Bowers still regarded Paul. A queer smile darkened rather than lighted his face. He pointed his finger at him as he spoke.

"Was it you that got me this job?"

Paul hesitated. "Well, they *did* ask me if I knew anybody for it up at college. So I—"

"Took me in for charity. Much obliged, Gardiner. Thank you."

"Mr. Gardiner's told me so often about your work and all," Barbara put in. "It's just fine, Mr. Bowers."

"I wanted to do a good turn, that's all. You've helped me a lot, Bowers. It was you that showed me how to work — up yonder, you know," said Paul, nodding toward the college quarter.

"Oh! I did, eh?"

"Surely."

"You seem to be profiting by my advice

very extensively, anyway." Bowers scraped his chin. "I congratulate you."

The others put down the fellow's surliness to any of a dozen causes, and laughed it away in a twinkling. And finally Barbara, perched on a desk, set the roof on their gaiety. She clapped her hands.

"Just the thing! You must entertain us, Paul. The honors of your warehouse, sir."

"How do you mean?"

"Is n't he stupid, Mr. Bowers! You must give us supper at once."

The madcap mood was on her. She had taken Paul down to the Settlement House early in the afternoon, and set him to teaching her boys how to box, while she told stories to half a dozen babies that swarmed into her lap the moment she sat down. She watched him gleefully, loving his strength and gentleness with the youngsters, applauding as loud as the boys when he slipped into gymnasium clothes and kept off the mad rushes and short-arm swings of Terence, the burly janitor. She had never half guessed his coolness and pluck before. She found herself actually cheering when, in the third round, Paul countered hard on the Irishman and sent him to the floor dazed and sprawling. And, as she hoped, Paul was not a second in stripping off his gloves and helping Terence to his feet.

"No hard feeling?" he asked.

"Devil a bit, sorr," answered Terence, heartily enough. "'T was a sweet blow."

"That's just as it should be," cried Barbara to herself.

He was all hers that afternoon, and she made him do a hundred things. From the Settlement they picked their way down to the harbor-side, where were strange streets full of Italian women with bright head-dresses, gossips that chattered almost as vociferously as their neighbors the slattern Jews. The policeman was surprised, although he knew well how the young ladies from Kirkland House went where he would hardly dare; the pawnbroker's clerk joked with the old-clothes man next door, and Paul was glad that Babbie could not understand. They came to the docks, and walking the length of the longest, scraped molasses from around the bung-holes of the great hogsheads; they had a long talk with the negro mate of the Porto Rican schooner that had just discharged her sweet and sticky cargo. Then they came up-town again, for the lights were jumping into life and the harbor streets began to fill with lounging stevedores and laborers.

"Shall we take a car?" asked Paul, looking at his watch.

She smiled, daring him. "So anxious to be home again?"

"Of course not. Only—"

"Only what?"

"Work, Babbie."

"Oh, work be—worked to death!" She caught him by the arm, with a laugh that swept him away. "Now we'll visit the famous house of Wardwell & Sons."

"Hurry up, then. They'll close pretty soon."

They made Mr. Parks very angry. It was indecent in a young lady to go skylarking about in any such fashion; it was inconsiderate on the part of the young owner of the firm to choose an hour for a visit except between nine and four. But Barbara talked to the old man sweetly, pretending in her fancy that Parks was a faithful old tenant and Paul the young duke, while she — well, never mind. Only a great deal of water had gone over the dam since the Winter.

"Have you been here long, Mr. Parks?"

"Thirty-three years and odd days. I—I'll wish you good evening, Miss Hare."

"Good night, Mr. Parks. Thank you for letting us in."

The old clerk grunted. "Guess *you'd* get in 'most anywhere. Say—" He came close to her, Paul standing a little aside to talk with a cou-

ple of draymen. "He 's a likely feller, young Gardiner. I ain't against him. Good luck, good luck and good night. Ho, ho!" laughed the old clerk. "Ho, ho, ho!"

Barbara laughed too. "What a nice old man!" she remarked to Paul when he came back.

"Who? Parks?"

"He 's delightful."

Paul looked at her solemnly. "I think you 're crazy to-day, Babbie."

"I am. And I 'm having a beautiful time."

Paul was despatched in quest of provisions, and Bowers pulled down the window-shades, stirred up the fire in the big round stove, which Wardwell & Sons found kept them warm enough, and dragged three of the big office-chairs up to a flat-top desk. He was very angry with himself for not being able to rattle away with Barbara; but of all the subjects he thought of, some were too silly, and the others he knew about only vaguely. How ought you to talk to a handsome girl the first time, who cannot guess that you have made an idol of her for three years?

"Do you—do you come down this way often?" inquired Bowers suddenly, when the office was made snug.

"I 've never come along this street," Barbara

answered. "But I go down to the Settlement twice a week."

"Afternoons?"

"Yes. The children are in school, you see, till three o'clock."

She had descended from her perch on a desk by now, and sat sedately by the stove in one of the chairs. Bowers wondered at her being so quiet all at once, who had come in like wind and sunshine. He tried again, gaining confidence as he became used to her presence. She was smaller than he thought.

"This is quite a holiday for me. I'm usually at work by now."

"Really?" She did not look at him. "But of course you graduate students work very hard. Mr. Gardiner's getting quite used up, I'm afraid." Her sigh was real.

Bowers laughed. "'T won't do him any harm. He never worked any before, I guess. I told him he was n't in for a very easy Winter, when he came to me for advice."

"You were very good to help him so much, I'm sure."

"Oh, it was nothing." Bowers waved away the very thought. "I can afford to help the boys, you see," he went on, straightening up his slouchy figure. "I've got a long start, Miss

Hare. You ask your grandfather about me. He 'll tell you. I 'm in the race to win. I 'm not afraid to work. Ah, how I love it all!"

He shot a glance at her, found she was listening, and drew one of his books toward him. He opened it as she raised her head.

"*Quando legemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da contanto amante;
Questi che nai da me non fia diviso.*

"*La bocca ni baciò tutto tremante:
Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse:
Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante."*

His rough voice caressed the lines.

"I know those," said Barbara.

"Do you? I 'm sure you 're as fond of them as I am. To live with such things, to have them next the heart and in the brain,— those and a thousand others,—and to know what they 've meant in the world's life ; oh, it 's so worth a man's grinding and slaving. What are three or four or five years of drudgery, after all?"

He was swept away dizzily before he knew it. And now he hoped that his sincerity had pleaded for him with this girl, who loved the highest things, more effectively than all his clumsy artifice. He did not dare look at her. He sat

on the desk, looking ever so far away, yet thrilling with eagerness for her first word. If she sighed now!

There came quick steps along the pavement; then they clattered up the wooden steps.

"That's Paul!" she cried, jumping up. "Let him in, Mr. Bowers. Are n't you hungry?"

The book was dashed to the floor. "Is n't Dante worth more," Bowers growled, "than—"

"He's always wonderful. Thank you for reading to me." But she slipped by as the big man groveled blindly after his book, and flung open the door with a little laugh of sheer happiness.

"Look out!" cried Paul. "Things are just balanced. Catch hold, Babbie. Bowers—?"

There were thin slices of savory ham, fresh rye bread, and a creamy cheese from the delicatessen shop; wooden plates, paper napkins, and three glittering knives and forks, which Paul said he had fairly to wring from the people in the basement of the big store which was just closing, a bottle of Macon and three glasses from Duggan's saloon on the corner. For table-cloth they spread out sheets of fresh blotting-paper, and then they pulled up their chairs.

"What will your grandfather say?" asked Paul, suddenly.

Barbara finished her glass. "I often stay

down at the Settlement for dinner. He won't worry a bit. Give Mr. Bowers some more ham, Paul. Dear, dear, *what a host!*"

There came dull little pauses somehow into the midst of the laughter. Perhaps Barbara was tired after the day's doings; perhaps Paul could not quite forgive Bowers for making a speech and drinking a noisy toast to the prosperity of Wardwell & Sons. Perhaps it was because Barbara had turned away from Dante and Dale's best scholar to welcome Paul Gardiner.

It was good that nobody was by to witness the rage that sent Bowers stamping and cursing about the office when he was alone again. He had waited so long for only a word with her, only one smile. He had hoped so that great things might happen—a pressure of his hand at good-by, an answer to the look he could burn into her look. And he had sat by like a dumb thing,—the brainiest man at Dale, he repeated,—munching cheese and ham, while she and the other man cracked jokes together about the silliest things one could imagine. Worst of all was the thought that he owed anything to the man he had come, after long waiting, to hate venomously. To know that Paul had secured him his place as watchman sent Bowers raging about again like a panther.

This Gardiner !

If only the fellow had laughed at him just for a second ; if only he had condescended to him — sitting so like a lord beside the girl, groaned Bowers, how sweet the next few minutes ! To catch him by his stocky throat and squeeze — or, better, to beat down his defense and mark that handsome face till to kiss it would be mere charity ! He wondered how Barbara would act. He fancied first, remembering his old-fashioned heroines of the novels, that she would scream and faint away ; but, considering her again, he saw her stand aside, smiling a little cruelly, her eyes with the tiger's fire behind them, waiting to stretch out her arms to the best man.

And should he lose ?

"I can't lose !" cried the watchman to the stillness. "She was only playing just now — teasing me by flattering him. Women do such things."

This Gardiner again !

Suppose, daughter of the scholar-world though she was, this girl should choose him because he was young and rich and clear-browed. The watchman shut his eyes in a scowl. It was hateful to think of the odds against the rough and poor. As a thousand times before, when the darkness of the world closed tight around him,

Bowers counted over each step of his toilsome march, and cursed those who, like Paul, rode on horseback with the breeze in their faces. Once more he wished he could strip off some of those cloth-of-gold caparisons; he found it possible to dream of lying out with his friends to hamstring the dainty thoroughbred as he paced through the lush grass.

The hour struck ten. The watchman raised himself on his elbow. Next day he would resign his place; but till then, on his last night, he would do his duty. But the yoke galled as never before.

This Gardiner, so rich and prosperous!

The watchman cursed each bale of wool he passed on his dreary rounds; he laughed grimly as he swore fellowship with the rats that did what they could to injure Wardwell & Sons' prosperity. Up many black stairs to the topmost of the great lofts Bowers carried his lantern, testing the fastenings of the iron shutters, closing the doors of the elevator-shaft. This ran from cellar to roof, a rough wooden box with a simple arrangement of weights and pulleys for hoisting bales of wool to the upper floors. His lantern showed Bowers, as he peered down, a regular chimney lined with dry and dusty wood, stained with grease from the pulley-weights.

Each duty done was that night a new spring of bitterness; the irony of it all bit like an acid. The blind rage caught hold of him again by the time he had descended to the cellar. That he might lose—he, the worthy man, the real student! That Paul might win and have Barbara at his elbow when he went to Paris, and the old realms of learning—the rich and clever amateur! A storm of thoughts, wild and evil, beat on the doors of his heart, and he opened wide. As he sat on a barrel, and listened to the devil on his shoulder, Bowers called joyously to one of his new comrades that scuttled across the floor with a flock of wool in his teeth.

He jumped down from his perch; his face lighted up bright as a flame. What was duty toward the man you hate? He was a fool not to strike when he could.

“Let’s see,” said Bowers, studying a little.

There were a can of varnish, an open keg of oil, brushes, and a heap of painty overalls and jumpers belonging to the men who were to re-decorate the offices, and next them stood a couple of wooden barrels full of sweepings—paper, shavings, bits of oily wool. The whole was just at the foot of the old elevator-shaft. The gas-jet, which burned day and night in this dark place, twisted and staggered at each draft

from above. Suppose the bracket were turned a foot or so to the right? A shred of burning cloth from the old cotton jumper hanging there on a nail would surely fall into the waste paper and other stuff. And then? The watchman listened to the beating of his heart.

"There's Paul!" Barbara cried again, as she sprang away from his Dante reading. Bowers raised his head, listening like a stag. "Look out he does n't win the fellowship," sneered Cameron.

The gas-bracket was swung over so that it nearly touched the light jumper. The flame bent before another gust of wind from the shaft, and the watchman dashed silently up-stairs and flung himself face downward on his rough couch. He was wet with sweat.

For what seemed hours he lay there rigid. It would be great fun to see Paul break through the fire-lines, crying for his wool-bales. This was the end of the first round.

"May the best man win!" he heard Barbara cry to him from her place.

A thin wisp of smoke curled across the ceiling, and for a second he laughed to see it.

"But it must be a fair fight," she called shrilly to his heart, the voice clear as a trumpet. He fell back on his bed in a kind of agony.

"I'm a coward!" he whispered hoarsely; "a damned coward!"

He threw himself on the door to the cellar, wrenched it open, and plunged down through the reddened smoke. He trod on his friends the rats crowding up the narrow stairs. The reek of the burning rags and turpentine choked him; his hands were blistered, his trousers scorched and singed as he kicked apart the blazing barrels; he tore his nails to the quick dragging down the hose. He crept along the floor, to fall gasping over the cock that released the water. But the fellow set his teeth and fought back the fiery air with his hands till at last the choking, sputtering stream was turned full on the flames which licked the base of the dry old shaft.

The smoke which leaked into the street through a broken cellar window brought the police; and the morning papers told how the young watchman was found blinded and faint, but working like a madman over some embers that still smoldered in a corner.

"You win, I guess," volunteered the policeman who tucked him in the ambulance.

"A fair fight, not the dark!" murmured the watchman.

Then his head fell back, and he sighed as one who is very tired.

VII

THE LOST COMEDY

FOR six days he lay motionless in the college infirmary, except when the nurse told who had come to inquire for him and read the name on the card which accompanied the box of roses. Then he sat up for a minute, and pushed the bandages up from his eyes; and when he dropped back he took with him one of the fullest blown of the flowers and laid it on his pillow. The quiet nurse smiled to herself. She had not guessed at this from her patient.

It was another week before the doctor gave him his discharge, with many warnings about his eyes and the avoidance of nervous strain.

“I wish you’d get away for a few days,” he chirped. “Why don’t you go home for a little? Just to give yourself a chance.”

“Home?” echoed Bowers. “For a chance? Good God!” And, without another word, he tramped out of the infirmary and away.

He had left home for good, he had told himself again. If his father or mother needed him, he would go and pay his duty, of course; but, for his own part, the place would never see him. As he walked down the hill he recalled bitterly all the details of his life down yonder in the little village — the long Sundays deadened by the parson's stupid harangue, the village politics of the senate convened nightly in the post-office, the library with its battered Scott and Dickens, its dusty Macaulay and Prescott, the acres of orchards that bloomed and bore with tedious regularity. His home was a prison, stultifying, killing everything within him that he cherished the most fondly. What of the high things was there? How very much of the shackling prejudices and pettiness of life that he boasted to be free from?

The high things! The learning, the culture, the beauty of the world! For so many years he had sought them sorrowing, and now the foolish doctor thought to do him good by recommending that he turn his back, even for a moment, upon the place where he found them to dwell.

He straightened the red rose which, faded now nearly black, dangled from his buttonhole.

The children at the Settlement felt a degree of astonishment when Miss Barbara left them for a

moment to go down-stairs and bring up with her another man — the second in two weeks. They asked her shrilly if this one would box like the other and make them laugh.

"Mr. Bowers can't, Joe. He was all burned in the fire."

"Oh! Was he really?"

They eyed him fearfully, with extreme respect, but found him somewhat dull, after all, since he only grinned at them; and demanded new stories from their adored young lady.

"Don't mind me," said Bowers, when Barbara looked to him for permission. "I—I like to watch you with 'em."

So for a long ten minutes she held her audience rapt with the adventures of Rumpelstiltskin, never heeding the presence of the big fellow who lounged against the wall, staring at her with eyes full of fire. Then she sent the babies off and rose.

"Thank you very much," the man said. "It was most interesting. How many do you look out for?"

"Dozens," she laughed back. "Come and look the place over."

She did not know what she was doing. For Barbara to show the chance visitor like Bowers all the things of her work was what happened

every week. And she loved the task ; for if the visitor was rich, the visit resulted in a check ; if he was poor, an efficient worker was often won over. She did not know what it meant to Bowers to see these good works being helped and managed by the girl he had looked on as the world's fairest creature. He had come to the Settlement that afternoon with his purpose clear enough, but he was swept to its accomplishment before he guessed.

They had completed their tour. He had seen the class-rooms, the model kitchen, the carpenter's shop, the little dressmakers, the big gymnasium with its noisy crowd of boys. They came at last to the little reception-room, and here they sat down by the cheek of the fire.

"I came to thank you for the roses," Bowers began. "I only left the infirmary an hour ago, and I headed straight here, for I knew you came down on Wednesdays. You see how I valued these ?" He held up his lapel, where the rose drooped limply.

"I 'm glad you liked them," Barbara answered simply. "They were little enough. We think you splendidly brave, Mr. Bowers."

"Nobody else remembered to tell me so, Miss Hare,—at least so pleasantly. The nurse thought me very silly, but, do you know, I kept the roses

by me all the time? Of course I could n't see them—”

“Your eyes?” she interrupted swiftly. “I hope they 're all right now.”

“But I liked to feel that your flowers were with me. Yours.” He hammered out his speech to the end. His tone was dogged and hard, but he spoke without effort.

“That terrible fire! Can you talk about it yet? It must seem like a nightmare to you!”

“A pretty real nightmare. I lost my only other suit of clothes, and scorched my hands pretty thoroughly.” He held up bandaged paws. “It was pretty real. Yes.”

She shut her eyes. The papers had been full of the man's heroism; how he fought the fire alone, and had been fairly draggled away crying that he must save what he could. She had conjured up a dozen pictures of that awful hour, and thought that she realized what Bowers had suffered; but the sight of the terrible scars on his forehead, and the poor hands still wrapped to the finger-tips, unnerved her.

“You can't work for ever so long,” she said at last. “Can you?”

“The doctor says I must be careful. But that 's all right. I don't care—much. A man must take his hard luck, you know.”

"Ah, but there are n't many who *do* take it so pluckily." Her beautiful face was all alright now. "I can't help saying so, Mr. Bowers."

"No, no," he protested. "I just had to stay in the old place. I had to do what I could. It was what anybody would have done."

"I don't think so."

"I'd have looked very nice running away. Don't make me out a hero. I'm not one at all."

She looked him in the eyes. "We admire you very much, Mr. Bowers."

The big fellow sat back in his chair. The beating of his heart fairly hurt him. He had waited so long for this! He had risked so much to win a look from her; and now she told him frankly, as one good friend to another, exactly what he had dreamed and prayed for in long, lonely hours.

"Do you mean that? Really?"

She flushed a little under his stare, but met him calmly enough. "It was a very brave thing to do. You risked your life."

"I had the best reason for that."

"Of course. But your duty—"

"My duty—certainly." He checked himself. His duty to save Paul Gardiner's trumpery wool-bales and cash-drawer!

"I hope you'll be all well again soon," she

was saying; but he did not listen. He was fighting to arrange in order the many things he had to tell her. He was on his feet now.

"You say you admire me?" he asked hoarsely.
"Is that true?"

"Certainly." She smiled at him again.

"Just because I helped put out a fire? I've done better things. You must listen to me. It's what I must say."

But she rose quickly. "I've heard all about you. My grandfather—"

"What does he know? He can't read in my heart, can he? How does he know what I've never told a living soul?"

He stepped quickly between her and the door. Barbara's color came and went.

"I must not stay any longer, please."

"You said you admired me just now. Your eyes thanked me for what I did two weeks ago. Are you afraid of me?"

"Afraid?"

"Another girl might be."

"Of you? Hardly, I think." She sat down again and waited for him to speak.

A kind of eloquence came to him. He told her everything. In a voice that shook more than once, he rehearsed the story of his lean years—the craving for the world's best and

highest, the hunger for a life other than that of common men. He counted for her his honors won against odds; the story of his fight with poverty and neglect he related with a kind of savage joy in the memory of his wounds and scars.

"Splendid!" she cried, off her guard for a moment.

A kind of cry escaped him. "You approve? Ah!"

A feeble little knock at the door interrupted him, and Barbara looked by him.

"Come in," she called.

"No!" Bowers stamped his foot. "Hear me through."

The door was pushed open a crack, and a scared little girl peeped in.

"Please, Miss Barbara—"

"Yes, dear?"

Bowers strode to the door and shut it. "You can talk to them another time."

"Mr. Bowers!"

"Please listen to me now. Can't you guess what this hour means to me? Tell me again that you approve my work. Tell me that—"

She shrank from him. "I don't understand. What have I to do with your work?"

"You ask?"

"I must not hear any more."

"I don't ask for you now. I'll wait — so loyally, Barbara. My great reward! The first of the high things I shall win from the world! I'm as brave as the rest. I'm going to be so great some day. Barbara, won't you let me hope for you? Hope that you —"

"Oh, Mr. Bowers, I'm so sorry."

"My God!" His bandaged hands fell limply to his sides. He turned away from her.

"I'm so sorry," she said again, feebly enough.

"Sorry!"

"But you must n't think of me so. You have so many things to work for that are ever so much more worth while. You —"

"Sorry! Never mind. I'm used to it."

As in a blaze of lightning, his old pride and arrogance came back to him. He did not want her pity. He could endure, he cried to his heart. A bitter laugh went from him. He raised his head.

"Never mind," he repeated. "You have n't hurt me."

"I should hate to think that I had," she answered. "It's better that way."

"Thank God for the love of an honest man," he quoted, his voice full of malice now. "Don't forget that. Put it behind you if you wish. Lead him on to hope. Make a fool of him —"

"That is ungenerous, Mr. Bowers."

"You said you admired me."

She shrugged her shoulders indifferently.

"Make a fool of an honest man, if you wish. You'll be sorry for it some day." A new suspicion flashed across his mind, and he gave it tongue. "I'm a better man than any of your Paul Gardiners, Lady Dainty."

"Will you please go away now?"

He caught up his shapeless felt hat. Then, at the sight of her, so beautiful, so far beyond his reach, a new rage came to him. The months of silent adoration bore bitter fruit. He uttered a terrible cry, and burst from the room.

The little people wondered who the savage man was that pushed them aside as he made his way blindly to the street; they wondered what set Miss Barbara crying just a little before she met them with her old jolly laugh.

"What do *you* suppose ails Bowers?" Paul asked Barbara the next day.

"I can't imagine."

"One'd think he had some grudge against me."

"Really?" Barbara lay back among her pillows. "How very curious!" She looked at him through her lashes. "There does n't seem any reason for his disliking you."

And Paul was puzzled anew by the big man's hailing him one evening, as he was crossing the Campus. He was now very pleasant in his clumsy, noisy fashion.

"See you 're going to read a paper," he remarked.

Paul sighed. Friday would mark his first appearance before the Language Club except as a spectator, and he had worried a good deal. The other members were so desperately keen in their criticism; two or three of the women had written reviews and shown bits of research work which the Master himself led in applauding. And his own little effort in appreciation seemed very meager as he read it over.

"Oh, yes. I 've got to go through it."

"I 'm going to read, too. The one I owed when I—was laid up."

"I suppose it 's as good as usual," Paul remarked.

"Oh, yes. They're all about alike. They'll pass in the crowd. What damned poor stuff most of them turn out! They 're simply encyclopedia articles rewritten—those female essays. Ah!"

Why had Barbara said she felt very sorry for this animal?

"I 'd better yield the floor to you, I guess," Paul answered mildly.

"Oh, no. They 'll want to hear yours, too. They 'd like to get your measure. Will your paper take long?"

"Twenty minutes."

"That 's all right. That 'll give me time enough. Going down-town?"

"I don't know, I 'm sure."

Bowers laughed. "Don't tell unless you want to. Go and see her all you like. *I* don't care."

He ran off into the darkness then, leaving Paul fuming. The latter made a step or two after the fleeing shape, eager for a moment to choke all speech out of him; but, on second thought, Paul reined in and held on his way.

"See you to-morrow evening," a voice yelled from over near the library. "Good night, Paulie. I won't bother you any more. It should n't be annoyed by coarse old Bowers another second."

It was to Jantzen's dirty old shop that Paul betook himself. He had come during the months to love books, and to know them, too. He had learned the thrill that comes from handling Japanese vellum and blind-tooling; he breathed deep the pungency of the ancient calf- and sheepskins; he could enjoy the beauty of an initial letter, or lament the misuse of type. So,

very often, when the library failed to attract, he went down to spend an hour or so rummaging in the old German's cobwebby corners and dirt-in-crusted upper shelves. It was possible to pick up things there both strange and curious; nor did Jantzen, unlike most of his tribe in these days, always feel sure about values and prices.

He nodded to Paul over his spectacles and went on posting up some kind of ledger without a word.

"Anything new?" Paul asked after a while.

"Noddings. All I sell iss old."

Their joke was never too stale to repeat, though it prefaced their every meeting.

The German looked up again after a laborious addition. "Dere iss dot old trunk yonder. I buy her dree days ago in der gentry. I haf not yet seen all der books. But dere iss noddings dere. Only boets."

Paul raised the lid and peered into the tumbled array of books. It seemed the random choice of some one who enjoyed hearing what all men had to say, whether their message was wise or silly, gay or grave. They were poets mostly, as Jantzen had said, these old fellows, men on whom some corner of Pope's mantle had fallen—writers of epistles, odes, reflections. Paul pawed the stumpy little volumes over im-

patiently, glancing at a title or a date of impression here and there, till all of a sudden he stopped short in his search.

"You find somedings? Yes?"

"I don't know. Have n't looked all through yet."

"Um! I dought I see you look bleased all at once."

"Here are some plays bound up together," Paul said, as quietly as he could. "I might take them, perhaps."

The German adjusted his glasses and looked the volume over, examining edges and binding. He forgot to open at the various title-pages.

"What you give for him, eh?"

"A dollar."

"All righd. I don't care noddings for blays."

"Not —"

"Ah, der great Goethe! Dose are not blays; it is a drama. But dose —"

"They are n't worth much — to most of us," said Paul. "And the book lacks some pages here at the end. See?"

All night long the light burned bright in the room high up in Divinity Hall. But when any one knocked, thinking to find a chair and a pipe ready, there came no answer. And all night long a young man, his face drawn and haggard,

went from book to book comparing and verifying, then covered sheet after sheet of paper with his big, nervous writing. The gray light of the dull morning surprised him still hard at his work.

His eyes burned in his head ; he could hardly breathe the air, heavy with the reek of many pipes and the odor of gas. His hand shook ; his back and shoulders ached. For seven hours he had bent to his task, and though it was still unfinished, he had to rest, if only for a few minutes.

The shrill alarm brought him awake again, staggering with sleep till the cold shower-bath lent some degree of consciousness. The look of his desk frightened him. He never could plunge again into that mass of scribbled pages and sprawling books. He would have to clear up first. So he set his material in even rows and piles, with the little book of plays on top ; swept up the ashes and the dottels clean ; opened the windows and rekindled the dead fire on the hearth. It would be easier to work if everything was orderly and fresh. He even straightened up the sofa-pillows and sharpened a couple of pencils.

At breakfast the other men commented on his absence. He was afraid of their questions. He must meet nobody to whom he would have to

explain his vigil. What he planned would lose all its point if anybody suspected even a hint of it. He gulped down a bowl of steaming coffee and a plate of cakes at one of the all-night lunch-wagons that was stationed near the Campus, and then set out for a tramp in the open country. Four miles an hour, with a run down the hills, would set his blood going again, and take away the pain from his eyes.

There followed three more hours at the desk—a work of recasting and revising, then the test of the paper read aloud; and when Paul lay down for another nap in the afternoon it was to see a vision of fiery pin-wheels and strange straight lines that moved slowly up and down.

“But it paid!” he cried, burying his head to shut out the visions. How his eyes pained! “This will stump old Bowers and all the rest of ‘em.”

The last of the little audience had hurried upstairs and had found a seat in the far end of the crowded, stifling room. There was not only the usual circle about the long table,—the club’s most important members,—but the rest of the room was filled also, and three or four sat in the hall near the door.

“Will you read your paper, Mr. Gardiner?” asked Dr. Hare, leaning back in his chair.

Paul drew his seat a little nearer the light. If only the ache would go from behind his eyes! He spread open his manuscript and looked about him. Bowers, across the table, grinned at him, and nudged his neighbor when Paul smiled back to the nod that Barbara sent him from her place over in the corner. She was there, wondering why Paul was so white and tired.

"I'm afraid I shall occupy a good deal of time," he said apologetically. "My material rather ran away with me. Please interrupt if I go too long, Dr. Hare."

"Provided it's interesting, your paper can be as long as—anything you please, sir." The Master beamed at his novice, while Bowers nudged Cameron again.

"I'm going to offer something different from what I announced. And if my paper appears very rough, please set it down to the fact that it was written overnight."

Dr. Hare's face darkened. He hated offhand work. A chill settled over the audience, quick to take its cue from the Master.

"Ahem!" Bowers nearly laughed aloud, and commenced reading his own paper to himself.

Very modestly Paul began. He traced over some points in dramatic history, gave the list of plays that the great Restoration dramatist was

known to have composed, those which in the course of time had disappeared. The audience stretched its legs. Dr. Hare was looking at the table and drummed a little tune on the arm of his chair.

Paul laid aside his manuscript, and smiled on the array of bored faces. He took up a little old book.

“One of these plays,” he said very simply, “I had the good fortune to discover and recognize, bound up with some others in this volume. Our friend Mr. Jantzen did not have a guess at what he was selling me.” He passed the volume up to the Master. “Would you care to see it, sir?”

“Great heavens, Paul!” The room laughed aloud. “Are you sure?”

“I think I can convince you, sir.”

The Master seized the volume, dived deep into it, nodded, and passed it to Karayama, who sat next him. “Go ahead. Let’s hear the rest. This is the kind of thing I want you all to do some day, ladies and gentlemen.”

Some day! At a bound this newcomer had passed them, who had toiled along the dusty highway for many weary months! Bowers passed the book to Cameron without so much as a glance at it.

The pages of rapid writing staggered and danced before Paul's eyes. The white light hurt him sadly. More than once he was tempted to ask his neighbor to read for him. But he kept doggedly on, and his heart was light within him, for Barbara had laughed aloud from sheer happiness when the audience applauded stormily his quiet announcement. He had shown them he was a worker. He had come near a triumph as the scholar-world judges such things. It was not every dunce who would have known the obscure, forgotten old comedy when he met it.

"You will prepare an edition?" Karayama asked when Paul had finished his paper.

Paul glanced at Bowers before he answered. The big man was staring at the ceiling.

"I don't know yet, Mr. Karayama. It's a small thing, after all."

"Ah, yes. But I would like the chance to — to perform a similar opuscule."

The chorus of admiring questions and comments went on as the book was passed from hand to hand; the evening slipped by so rapidly that even the undergraduates sat up straight in their bent-wood chairs. Bowers rustled through the leaves of his manuscript twice before Dr. Hare paid any heed. Then he smote the table heavily with his fist.

"Bless me!" exclaimed the Master. "I 'm afraid we forgot you, Mr. Bowers."

"It 's barely possible," the student answered, watching to see if the sneer in his voice went to its mark.

"I 'm truly sorry."

"You 're very good to say so, Dr. Hare."

The Master shot one glance at him from under heavy brows. It was as though lightning had gone through the room. The audience looked into its lap or at the bare walls, anywhere but at Bowers or at one another. The Master waited many seconds before he spoke; and then it was with all mildness.

"We all regret not hearing what Mr. Bowers has to offer. His paper on the—the—well, never mind." Bowers flung his head up angrily. The very title of his work forgotten! The room thought that the man's lesson was a hard one. "But it will be impossible to have it this evening. The time is short. And is n't it best to break up now, reserving Mr. Bowers's paper till some later date—whenever an evening is open? I think"—the old man laughed a little—"I think we 've had excitement enough for one meeting."

The audience laughed too, all but Cameron, who kept close to Bowers on the way to the street. Here the big fellow stopped short.

"Go on, Cameron," he ordered. "I want to be left alone — for five minutes or so."

"I'll stay too, I guess. You need rest and quiet and amusement. Come up to the room."

"No."

"What you going to do?"

The other made no answer, but drew back into a shadow. The door of the little house opened again and Paul came out.

"That's all right," said Bowers, slowly. He jammed his hat on tighter, and loosened his coat. "That's first-rate."

"Oh, Paul!" The door had swung open once more. It was Barbara that stood in the yellow light. It was she that called. Paul stopped and looked back. "Won't you wait a minute?"

Together they came down the street, laughing over something,—some joke that Barbara could not wait to tell. As they drew near the shadow, Cameron laid his hand on Bowers's arm.

"Careful, old man!" he whispered.

"What are you worrying about?" asked Bowers, with his big laugh. "Let's be going home."

Cameron hesitated. "You're a queer critter," he said. "Just now—"

"Just now!" cried Bowers. "That was a

year ago. That was when our young but rising scholar walked unattended. Women, my dear Cameron, hate the sight of violence and bloody hands." He laughed again. "I wonder if Cohen keeps open as late as this."

"Why? Got anything to pawn?"

"No, sir. Something to buy." He walked half a dozen paces before he added: "My position as watchman and rising genius demands the purchase of a protection against things dangerous and noxious."

"I did n't hear you say that," said Cameron, slowly. "Better go home, old man."

One or two of the women on the stairs behind her had giggled when Barbara tore open the door and called to Paul out in the darkness. She blushed a little under her veil. It was a silly thing to do, she told herself; for a moment she wondered if she could possibly explain to Miss Little and Miss Stein why she had hurried so to the door the moment Paul had left the house, following Bowers. Her action's motive was simple enough.

"They seem to think I am in love with him," quoth Barbara to her heart impatiently. She was only afraid, she told herself, lest something happen to Paul at the hands of somebody who might be called his rival in the things of the

scholar-world. What more natural than to desert her grandfather and pursue the young man before he could come to any harm?

She took pains to keep between him and the mouth of the dark street which they had to cross, glancing furtively into the shadow where she fancied she saw two black shapes standing close to the wall of the big dormitory. She gave a happy little sigh when they came again into the half-light of the hissing street-lamps, and heard Bowers's coarse laughter behind them.

"Poor old beggar!" exclaimed Paul. "I was sorry for him back there. The governor can be severe, Babbie."

"But think how insolent he was. And it made everybody mad to see the way he took your success. He was detestable, Paul."

Paul hesitated, then stopped. "Could you run home from here, Babbie? I'd like to catch him and cheer him up some. I don't like to put him in a hole."

"*I could* run home," she replied; "but I don't intend to do so alone. No, you must come."

As on the afternoon of the fire, when she had led him such a race, so she was to-night. She gave herself up to her new happiness and fear. She could shout for joy in spite of the vague terror in her heart that told of her dream's fond-

ness. To have him by her, to guard him with her body from the shadow's dangers—all this made the hour golden for the girl, though as yet the touch of it all was new to her hand. Barbara, looking up to the clear stars, found that she would have much to write that night, if she was a true girl, when her diary was spread open.

"You're very quiet," said Paul.

"I?" she laughed. How little he guessed the sunshine and the lightning! They had reached the old house by now, and she dared add, when they were standing at the door, "Let's make this evening a regular jubilee. There's some of it left, and—and I feel like being very happy, indeed. Will you help?"

"Yes, indeed. It *is* a day to remember, Babbie. I really think I scored to-night."

"With your play, you mean? The paper you read?"

"Of course. What else?"

What else, indeed! Perhaps his eyes were dim from over-study.

She looked past him to the somber park and the distant street full of life and light. "Your paper! Of course, that was bigger than anything else. That was *really* important."

The glow within her died away, only to flame up again more fiercely than before. A kind of

anger kindled it now. He chose the thistles when the roses leaned to him from the wall. Was this for her to glory in?

"How small it will seem some day!" she said to him, when they were established, the hearth between them.

He chose to think she praised him. "I'd hate to think I was going to stop with this. I hope it will seem small enough."

She had begun badly, Barbara discovered. She was at a loss how to go on, but sat watching him under the shadow of her hand. Paul stared drearily at the fire. She said not a word till he leaned back and covered his eyes with both hands.

"Tired?"

"A little, I guess. I was up all night, you see. It's my eyes that bother me mostly. They'll be all right to-morrow, though."

"Oh, yes," Barbara replied; and continued with entire irrelevance, "I heard from Peggie Austin to-day."

"Did you? Tell me about her. What are they doing?"

"Would you really like to hear?"

"Try me."

Very cautiously—for much might come from the next hour if she made good use of it—the

girl began to tell him of the doings up yonder, where full Spring was and the glories of new life. Peggy hinted at it; and from what the little letter said, Barbara went on with fair imaginings — the trees' new greenery, the dance of the brook —

"Think of that land of mine all going to the devil!" cried the student, sitting up straight. "Oh, Babbie, I'm so hungry for it — all the life there — now and then."

"Remember how we used to follow after Simon —"

"When he was plowing? Remember helping load the hay? O Babbie!"

She laughed aloud, her happiness overflowing. He would not go back to the live, open world all alone, sang Barbara gleefully. To be with him always, at his work, at his play, this was the idea that ruled her. And if in the Dale world a man's work must be his own, where none can help and where the joys are not to be shared, then hey for other fields under the broad sky! cried Barbara.

She could not know how near Paul was that night to surrender. With a rush like the tide, a bitter hatred of his scholar's work swept over him. It was a reaction, a doctor might tell him, from the strain of his last hours. As in a mirror he seemed to see all the life the Master led him into figured

in his night's vigil — the applause of the Language Club, the glare Bowers sent him across the table. "This a man's work!" he cried, challenging the girl who had told him of it. She made no answer, content to listen to his storming.

"I hope my poor father has n't been looking down on me," Paul concluded savagely. "I've been finely dutiful in all this business."

"How do you mean?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know? Oh, come, Babbie!"

"I know nothing," she cried eagerly.

"It 's not a long story," Paul replied slowly. He paused as if in doubt, looking down at her with unseeing eyes. "I wonder why I should n't tell you."

"Ought you?" she faltered, trying to be honorable.

"I suppose Austin has spread it around. He 's a dear man, but I wish sometimes that father had had another lawyer for that Ashley end of things."

"Your father?" Barbara echoed softly.

Paul leaned on the back of a chair. "He was anxious for me to go to Ashley and build the old place up, you know. He—he left some such request."

"Oh!" she cried. "O Paul!"

The sudden grief in her voice made him pause, alarmed for her.

"How could you — listen when I advised you to come here?" she exclaimed. "Oh, how could I ever have done it? Why did you let me persuade you, Paul?"

The two of them found it very strange and wonderful, in the later times, that his answer was as sincere and honest as was her question.

"I always fancied I'd like the scholar's life best of all," replied Paul.

Barbara felt herself in a whirl. She saw what a help to her this chance happening might be; to urge Paul to the life his dying father wished for him might lead him away from Dale — from the day's work and the night's vigil in which she could have no share. Up there it would be different, she dreamed. She reached forward to her happiness, then snatched her hand away. Was this honest? something asked her. A hatred of herself, moreover, for having led Paul from his allegiance struck at her, a grief that he had answered just now as he had brought the tears to her eyes.

The two sat there together before the dull fire a long time without a word. She did not dare speak, lest she must say what her heart bade her; and Paul, dreary and tired, thought nevertheless

that he was bound not to forget that it was the scholar's life — her dearest love — that he had cried out against. He must be polite, at all events. They rose to their feet quickly, glad enough when Dr. Hare came into the quiet room.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Master. "What a very dull pair!"

He sat down between them, drawing a great sigh of content; but looked swiftly from one of his children to the other when, after a couple of minutes' strained gaiety, they fell again into their silence.

"What's the matter?" asked the Master, bluntly. It was not possible that they had quarreled, he said to himself; it was not possible, he swore, replying to the fear that whispered treachery, that they had come to lovers' silences.

Barbara drew back a little as Paul raised his head. She saw the storm gather in her grandfather's eyes, swift and black.

"Do you think that my work amounted to anything to-night?" Paul asked. He showed his crumpled manuscript, which he had kept in his hand ever since its reading.

"It amounted to a great deal," the Master answered, and added with a note of reproach: "I could hardly say more than I did at the meeting, Paul."

"I know," the boy went on,— "I know. You were very generous."

"Well?"

He met the old man's gaze boldly. "Is the whole thing worth while—for me, Dr. Hare?"

Barbara slid her hand into the Master's. He held it tight, as though to assure himself that loyalty still lived.

"Do I need to tell you our creed over again, my boy?" the Master inquired very gently. He had fought down his first anger.

"Ah, I shall never learn it," cried Paul. "A little while ago I believed its every article, but now—"

"It's a hard faith; it requires bravery from its professors, boy, and so much steadfastness. But it's a very beautiful life to follow out."

Paul's face was in his hands. His poor eyes! He heard the Master's deep voice booming like a far-off bell.

"Scholarship means power. It means power for good, a greater power than any but the priest's and the doctor's. It means bringing light into the young world's dark places, Paul."

No answer from the young man. The girl nestled closer, for her grandfather's voice trembled a little. She loved him so!

"But how writing a fluent essay on a forgotten

play by a forgotten dramatist has any part in this power for good, as you call it, I—I just can't see."

"You added a little to the sum of the world's knowledge, Paul."

"And my eyes are burning up," the other retorted bitterly.

Barbara leaned forward. "You're hurting him, Paul!"

"Let him go on," said the Master, clutching Barbara's hand. "Let him go on. We may as well understand each other."

"I think so too," said Paul.

"You must go away," she interposed, rising from her place, and taking a stand before her grandfather. "You must n't say any more. Don't you see how cruel you are, Paul?"

"I must be honest with myself."

"No," she cried eagerly. "You'll not be so foolish as to give up a work you've begun so well. Just because you're a bit tired. For shame, Paul! You don't mean what you said just now. You don't mean it—really."

He drew away from her gentle anger, full of perplexity. "You advised me to give it up yourself, or you hinted plainly enough, not an hour ago, Barbara."

"I?" she stammered, caught unawares.

"You did," repeated Paul, hotly. "It 's hardly fair."

"Oh, go away!" she cried again, in a kind of despair, actually pushing him out of the room. The old man sat looking dully at the low fire.

"It was for his sake," whispered Barbara, when the two were out in the hall. "You must have understood, Paul. He—he 's an old, old man. And, O Paul, he counts on you so entirely."

"I think you were unfair to me, Babbie."

She opened the front door. "I love my grandfather more than anything in the world," cried Barbara.

"Good night," he said, tendering his hand.

"Good night," she replied, holding it a moment. "And, Paul, promise not to overwork. You must take ever so much better care of yourself. It would be very silly in you to break down."

"If I stay in the work, I 'll win, by—"

"Don't swear. You 'll win, and beat—Bowers, I suppose."

He could trust himself no farther, but swung up the silent street without a look back at the girl standing in the doorway, silhouetted against the light within.

The Master looked up wearily when she returned.

"We must fight for him still, Babbie."

She dared not let him see her face, for she knew how near were the tears. She stood behind him, with a hand on each of his shoulders.

"And we 'll win him to our life yet."

"Our life!" she quavered.

"The scholar's life. You 'll help me a little longer, darling?"

She came to him then and lay against his breast. The sobs choked her.

"I 'll try, grandfather,—oh, I 'll try."

"My loyal girl!" whispered the Master.

VIII

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

IT was the Hares' good fortune that they could get away from low-lying Oldport among the first of those who fly away from the old place for odd hours or short days before the university closes for good. The other old house which had descended to the professor — this from the Seabury line — lay only an hour away from Oldport; and because he loved this place only one degree less fondly than the house on Maple Street, he changed his headquarters thither always by the middle of May, running in to and back from his college work morning and evening.

The house seemed to have been reared in a spirit different from that which was behind the work of the New England builders. It might have been the pride of one of the Virginia mansors. Indeed, it was said the colonel built it after a visit to some friends on the James River. At any rate, the mansion had little of the North in

its looks, just as the high-living, bountiful colonel, with all his goodness and mettle, lacked most of the qualities upon which his hard-fisted, clear-thinking neighbors prided themselves, which of a Sunday the parson recommended to the Seabury pew whenever it was occupied. It was built of ruddy brick, imported from the old country. And the pillared porch, the giant chimneys, the side-wings, curving into a broad embrace, gave the house an odd air of friendly dignity far to seek in any other of the village, — or, indeed, of the whole region roundabout,— although Ashley boasted, properly enough, of the comfort and elegance in which its gentlefolk lived. Perhaps there was something of distinction, too, in its location. It stood on the westward slope of a hill, so near the top that from the upper windows you could see far to the East. It was surrounded by many acres, except in front, where only a lawn — and that none of the broadest — separated the house from the road.

Only a little of the old glory had departed from the place. A few acres of chestnut timber were gone; the great stables were empty now, except for a couple of carriage horses and Barbara's Ned, the gray gelding; the ball-room was opened only now and then. But throughout the rest of the house was as much life and jollity as

ever, for the Hares always came thither for the play-time of the year and brought the play-spirit into the old house with them.

Just now, however, there was a period of quiet over the place. Dr. Hare was away all day in Oldport, so Barbara was left quite solitary from breakfast till she drove down to Ashley to meet the evening train and bring her grandfather back for dinner. They had been unable, for once, to get anybody to keep her company ; the big house seemed to echo her footsteps.

So Barbara fell into the way of taking up again her visits at the Austins' house. And now, as always, Barbara found that next her own she loved most the octagonal upper room where she spent so much of the day with Peggie.

It was very peaceful there, and quiet. Bees droned about the wistaria that clambered to the eaves ; a half-dozen white pigeons paraded up and down the roof, making the comfortable noise peculiar to their kind ; a light scent of moist earth and the earliest flowers drifted up from the straggling garden below. And little Peggie Austin, who sat near her, stood in Barbara's eyes for all that was sweetest and best. It was all very pleasant. Barbara smiled as she looked out across the fields.

To those that love it, Ashley Valley never ap-

pears otherwise than beautiful. Even in March, when the elms stand dismally naked and wet, when the fields lie all muddy, dirty snow in every sheltered hollow, when the colors of the boundary hills east and west are blurred by sul- len mist, the villagers and those who dwelt in the outlying farm-houses found their land charm- ing. They taunted their northern neighbors with the gloom of the forests where the snow lies oftentimes till June; the boasts of the southerner they met with acid depreciation of a landscape nearly always clad in monotonous green. To those, native or alien, who viewed it under the glow of the sunny May afternoon, the valley seemed very lovely. To Barbara Hare, who had viewed its length and breadth in every season, the picture spread before her, as she sat in her friend's wide southwest window, was charming enough to call her thoughts far from the matters she had been talking over with Peggie since two o'clock. In the sweep of the long, elm-dotted meadows that stretched away southward and westward to the curving, shining river, in the gentle rise of the slopes beyond, which merged into woody uplands, and ended abruptly where a gray rock-wall of hillside leaped up, the colors delicate under a mellowing haze, there was that which made the two girls' chatter dwindle away

until it ceased altogether, and they sat gazing at the far-away things of the world which began so fairly.

Two or three horsemen came into sight, following the river-road. Peggy uttered a little exclamation, and stood up to see better.

"They're going to the meet," she said. "See the pink coat? Look, Babbie; just over the top of the pear tree."

"The meet?" repeated the other girl, a bit listlessly.

"Yes. Over at Briar Farm. It's only a drag, of course. But they get some good runs." Until the last man had crept by, Peggy stood at the window motionless. Then she said:

"They go by there quite often."

"And you sit up here, and wish they'd come nearer, so that—"

"Babbie!"

"Bad child! You know you do."

"They're very nice, some of them," Peggy rejoined, looking out again. A bit of a quaver in her voice made Barbara lay down her work-bag. She decided not to go home immediately.

"Very nice," Barbara whispered.

No reply for a full minute. Peggy was very busy tracing little patterns on the window-pane with her forefinger. Her cheeks were very red. Then—

"Do you think so?" she queried curiously, studying her design with her head cocked on one side.

"Look around, and I'll tell you just what I think. You are a deceitful baggage, Peggy Austin!"

"Babbie, dear, please stop laughing. I don't want to — to look around."

The little pattern on the pane was never finished, unless the frost remembered it, for Barbara swept the artist into her lap, and held her small hands firmly.

"Can you tell me?" she asked in the other's ear.

"It's a secret," came the answer, very low. "We said we would n't tell anybody yet, because Dick, you see —"

"Dick — Farquhar?"

"Why, yes, Babbie, of course. But please don't laugh."

"I'm not. Oh, you sly ones!"

"And he said — he said, Babbie, that if he knew I was thinking of him, and hoping for him, it would make his work nothing at all, Babbie; and so —"

The story ended in a long sigh. The tender little face was very serious now, the eyes like stars.

"Oh, Peggie, sweetheart, you 're very young."

Miss Austin sat up straight, perching on Barbara's knees as light as a thrush, and smoothed her tumbled hair. "I 'm nineteen, and Dick 's twenty-one," she replied triumphantly. "Almost as old as you, madam, both of us."

Barbara caught the infection of the child's quick laugh. "Oh, I am so glad!" she cried.

"Promise not to reproach him. He—he could not help himself, he said."

Peggie's fine blush made them both laugh again; and then a long silence ensued. There was so much to say that neither knew how to begin. Their happiness, welling up from the heart, stifled the words.

"Remember, it 's a secret," said Peggie. She had followed Barbara to the gate.

"Bad girl, of course it is. Not a hint until you and Master Richard give me leave."

"And listen, Babbie," the child continued, coming close and looking up into her friend's eyes. "You do truly believe we are ever so earnest? It would be so dreadful if you made a joke of it all."

The tears were close behind her words as Barbara made reply. She hardly saw the grave little flower she bent to kiss. "Good-by, dear," she said, more hastily than she meant. She

strained Peggy to her heart, heedless of the smiles of the passers-by.

"Good-by," called Miss Austin, retreating toward the house. She was singing as she passed through the doorway.

"Everybody is very happy," Barbara told to the air, as she mounted the hill, and waved a greeting to the lonely gray old Coffin sisters, whose dull house she passed just at the beginning of the open country. She laughed delightedly at the remembrance of Peggy's blushes. The hedge was green, the robin sang in the elm's swaying top, the breeze came cool and fresh from far out where the great sea was.

"Oh!" Barbara exclaimed, with a little cry.
"It's so good to be alive!"

"It's the best thing in the world!" replied a voice in her ear.

"Oh, Paul! Why—"

He looked haggard and white behind his smile. He had just run up for overnight, he said, to ask the professor—

"Oh, yes!" said Barbara, interrupting. She moved away from him to a chair. "I see."

It was some question of a book which somebody had drawn from the university library, which he knew Professor Hare had on his shelves here. He explained all about the point

of biography it contained, how the paper he was to read at the club would be incomplete without it. He talked very fast and fluently, with a trick of using the jargon of his "shop" quite new. He seemed keyed very high. He contradicted, lectured, argued with great indignation and fervor, as if unable to realize that he was supposed to be talking at his ease to a handsome girl at the end of a flawless afternoon.

She could not look at him. She felt the tears close behind the words she spoke quite at random.

Down in the valley there was a young man riding quietly home on a bonny hunter, back from a day outdoors, brown-cheeked, clear-eyed, a part of the young season's life. There was the good-night kiss, sweeter because nobody could be nigh; a girl singing lightly to herself as she watched her lover away. Barbara sighed, remembering and fancying. The man fell silent, his eyes grew vacant. Only his fingers kept alive, and they danced a kind of death-dance on the arm of his chair. Her heart cried out half in pity, half in anger. She hated herself for what she had done; she wept, almost aloud, because this was her doing. She had helped form the scholar; but—

"Paul," she said, quietly and suddenly, "can't you stay here awhile?"

"Here? Why—"

"Stop work a week."

He had a dozen quick objections. "Besides," he added, jumping into saddle again, "it's all so splendid down yonder. A woman can't guess at it. It's a kind of charm, Barbara. Every day, every hour almost, there's something new to get hold of or to hear about. It's a new wine I've drunk of. I know my head is turned by it, for it's strong, Babbie; but it's a kind of fountain of youth for a man so soon as he gets used to it. Just to feel that you know things, that you're going to know and do one thing better than anybody else! They can't make me stop now."

She had longed for the day when he would talk like this. And now that she heard him, it turned her heart dead within her.

He made her listen almost roughly. "Do you remember last Fall? Goodness, but it seems long ago, Babbie! And Paris! I had no more idea then of all this than the man in the moon. You started me, Babbie. It was you, and nobody else, that got me to work. And I do thank you for it. I'm going to put it through, as they say."

"As they say," she repeated to herself. The world he left behind, probably. He spoke a different language now.

"The farm — " she hazarded.

"I can't bother with that just now."

"But you must n't kill yourself," she stammered. "Work is n't everything in the world, Paul."

"It's the reward I'm after, Babbie."

"A Leipsic doctorate of philosophy," she replied, not looking at him. The bitterness she could not keep out of her voice. And she added: "An article a year in some learned publication. '*Did Mahomet have five wives or six?*'"

Paul did not hear her fling at all. He was looking very far away, his scrubby chin on his breast.

The murmur of voices kept up steadily all through the long evening from the room where Professor Hare and Paul sat. Barbara could hear the young man's tones fierce and fast as gun-fire, giving place only for moments to the voice of his senior. It was an hour after the usual time that she opened the door, carrying the little tray of glasses and the decanter.

"Night-caps, gentlemen," she announced, her smile bright as ever.

She started to clear a little space on the littered table on which to set down her burden. Neither of the men offered to help her; neither answered her; neither spoke till she fluttered to

the floor some sheets of paper covered with Paul's rough, big writing.

"Look out!" he cried swiftly. "Please don't touch those."

He was bent low over a note-book he held in his lap, and returned to his scratching the next moment. Professor Hare looked up over his glasses. "Ah! Yes. Thank you, Babbie!"

For the first time in her life she missed the love-note in his voice, which always went under and through his courtesy. Barbara bent her head.

"Shall — shall I leave the things?"

"Yes, dear."

Paul sighed, then commenced drumming impatiently with his pencil. He said nothing at all. In a deathly stillness she painfully set the decanter and glasses straight, her cheeks ablaze, seeing nothing, half perceiving only that her grandfather kept his finger on a particular line of the manuscript he was reading from. He was waiting to go on with his dictation. It seemed, somehow, the more cruel to Barbara that he had been reading from a page she herself had copied out for him.

"That's very nice, indeed," he said, as to a child. "Thank you once more, Babbie."

She turned away. "I must n't interrupt you, — gentlemen."

"We *are* busy, dear. Don't sit up."

"No, sir."

Paul scrambled to his feet as she was leaving, and followed her across the room. His hands were full of papers, he carried his pencil in his mouth like a bit. And Barbara knew that it was he who shut the door tight after her.

There stood in the broad hall a great Italian wedding-chest, which some Seabury bride had brought with her when she came to share her young lord's kingdom. Its place was just beside the library door, and its flat top made a kind of broad seat, from where one could hear part of what was being said inside the room. Barbara stood still a moment at the foot of the stairs. Then, with a sob, she retraced her steps ever so softly, and sat herself on the chest's lid. The dim light from the candles showed her face very white now, and her eyes bright like a troubled spring. Her hands lay quiet in her lap. She leaned back against the wall, the figure of one hoping that some day the palace gate may open to receive her.

From within came Paul's voice, now querulous, now doubting, now thankful. Then, as her ears grew used to the sound, she could make out bits of the men's talk,—they were more at ease now, she thought,—and she heard just what

she had hoped this man one day would speak from his heart. There were plans of high things — honors to be tried for, work to be done. A great ambition was awake and eager to accomplish.

She shut her eyes and tried to remember the indecision, the indifference of the year before, how she had hated his way of looking at life. And for a while she seemed to comfort herself. Then rose up the remembrance of the man, young and fair to see, whose portrait the great Frenchman asked to paint. She gave herself up to dream again of life with him whose arms had carried her as safely as a cradle, who risked all for a poor cook with a broken leg.

“But some German has done it, I think, sir,” came from the other side of the door. “I saw his thesis just the other day. It’s not altogether adequate, though. And I’m not sure but it’s worth doing over again, if one could get at the sources. That’s the trouble over here.”

He had lived twenty years since last September. He was to be a great scholar. He was to make the most of what power God had given him. All this well begun, but Barbara sat far into the night, crying softly to herself.

Jerry Austin, the black spaniel, was sadly puzzled. It was not because he had to leave

his warm bed in the lower hall at a very early hour, for that happened often, the queer outdoor sounds of the hour just before daybreak being those which bring a conscientious watch-dog to his feet the quickest. Nor was he altogether surprised that his dear lady came stealing down the dim, scarcely defined staircase and across the hall, where only the upper part was at all light, sternly whispering Jerry to make no noise; for many an early morning jaunt afield had the two enjoyed together, returning with arbutus blossoms, it might be, or wild strawberries, or gorgeous scarlet leaves, according to the season, with which to decorate Mr. Austin's breakfast-table. What did make Jerry stand aside with anxious eyes and pricked ears were his worshiped mistress's queer doings after she had painfully unbolted the heavy front door, and had crept down the brick walk to the silent street. By all rights she should have turned to the left, and followed along until she came to the lane; for this was the shortest way into the open country, and the only one that could possibly interest a person of sense, as Jerry thought. Any other meant long plodding on brick pavements, past the homes of several fierce dogs like the Wetherell's Pinch and old Smith's Jess or Jack. They would have to go a half-mile before meeting any game;

they were bound to pass the stone wall where the dreadful black-snake lived who crushed and killed Jerry's poor little friend, the beagle. Jerry sighed and dawdled about some lilac bushes for some time, hardly wishing to follow Miss Peggie when he saw her turn the wrong way. But, finally, curiosity overcame his reluctance. Of course he pretended vast indifference to her little call, and followed afar off, turning his back if she looked around for him; but he never lost sight of his lady for a second. If he disapproved of her silly actions, he was, at any rate, eager enough to see to what end they would lead her.

For fifteen minutes or so Jerry trotted along discontentedly, only a little cheered by the fact of not meeting any enemies or monsters, although he saw where Black-snake had lain coiled up in the dust. His spirits rose some when his mistress and he reached the beginning of the farm-land. He began to gallop, and made little forays into the fields along the road. He had a good chase after a ground-squirrel; he caught the scent of a fox. He found a mysterious edible in a ditch. Things were not so bad, after all. Miss Peggie was not so silly as Jerry had feared.

He was on a hunt in a meadow, having a grand time scaring the crickets and field-mice,

when Jerry heard a horse coming up the road. Thinking he might meet Dobbin or Belle, he plunged through the stubble at top speed, jumping high so as to see better, forgetting in a second the errand he was so busy about.

There was a horse, sure enough, but a stranger, who shied as Jerry sniffed gingerly at her off forefoot. This, too, when she was standing still and had seen Jerry coming.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Jerry, passing on. "What foolish creatures men-people and horse-people are!"

"Quiet, lass!" a man said. "Steady!"

"Will she stand, Dick?" asked Miss Peggie. The man dismounted.

Overhead a thousand birds were singing; the morning breeze waked the sleepy leaves into their dancing and the tree-tops to their creaking; the tiny creatures of the roadside came out and commenced flying or scuttling about. Everything that was made for Jerry's amusement and happiness was at his command, but he had no eyes for aught save his mistress. Once more she acted as Jerry had never seen her act before, and the sight worried him into noisy protests, which, to his chagrin, went quite unheeded. His lady always used to mind him when he warned her from danger. But after a little, even though he

mistrusted the young man who stood so close to Miss Peggie, the feeling stole into faithful Jerry's heart that, somehow or other, here was no place for his interference. So he betook himself into a little alder covert and watched out of the tail of his eye, pretending great interest the while in some old bird-tracks on the wet earth.

It happened to be just before the gateway of the old Seabury house that all this happened. Jerry was busy in the ditch at the foot of the bank which sloped up and back to the high privet hedge. On the other side, just at the beginning of the drive which swept up in a wide half-circle to the house, stood a kind of summer-house, overgrown with Virginia creeper, disliked by the professor because its rustic look was sadly against the character of the rest of the place, but suffered by him to endure because Barbara was wont to sit there on hot days. They had a little tea-cupboard fitted up in a corner. From the place one could see through and over the hedge, but because it stood so high above the road nobody passing would dream that so near him was a good lookout from which to see and hear all he did or said.

Barbara shrank away when she caught sight of Jerry, praying that he might not explore up to where his other dearest lady was. Some im-

pulse had sent her afield, looking for freshness from the morning, now the bitterness of the house came back.

She thought of flight, but feared that the creak of the old flooring, the lightest rustle of her skirt, might betray her. She looked down into the road hungrily for a moment, then covered her eyes.

"It was so dear in you to come 'way out here," Dick was saying. The girl laughed a little and crept closer.

"'T was because I wanted to, Dickie."

Jerry stole away on tiptoe. He did not think it honorable to spy any longer. And his doggie heart was a bit heavy, for he had learned that all his lady's love was not his. The sun leaped up gloriously above the bristly ridge of Sycamore Hill. The colors of the valley became royal once more.

"A new day!" exclaimed the young horseman, looking toward the sun, and then down along the far-stretching road. "It 's rather for us a new life beginning, sweetheart."

Peggie broke from his embrace, all radiant, and stretched out her arms to meet the gold and rose in the east.

"A beautiful day!" she cried. "Your day, Dick, and mine. Our day, dear."

"His day, too!" Barbara cried, almost aloud. She seemed to answer a vague challenge. "Paul's day of doing great things well!"

Then she broke from her covert, and sped on tiptoe up the driveway, the laughter of the boy and girl following her. Hannah was opening the blinds as Barbara came up to the house.

"Land's sakes, Miss Babbie! Where 've yo' been?"

"I?" She tried to laugh.

"It 's too yearly fo' the likes of yo', honey. My, yo' 're jest white. Seen a ghost out yonder?"

Her mouth was drawn tight at the corners, her eyes were deeply ringed. She nodded "Yes" to the old woman's question.

Hannah's eyes bulged. "Honest, honey?"

"I—I think so, Hannah. Let me in, please."

Mr. Austin was moving about in the garden when the two strays came home again.

"Runaways!" he said, as he kissed his daughter. "Where have you children been *this* morning?"

Peggie tried not to be discomfited by Jerry's sly leer. "Not very far," she murmured. "Just this side of the cross-roads. Just by the Hare house. Is n't it nice that Babbie's here again!"

IX

BARBARA TAKES THE FIELD

THE university had begun to cast up its year's accounts. June was near, and with it Commencement, which was the end of things.

"It's been a good year," said Bowers. "First-rate."

"If you're pleased, everybody else is, I guess. It is n't so often we can be quite as enthusiastic as those lazy damned undergraduates and their rich papas. Jolly college life! Alma Mater! 'Neath the Elms! I wish they'd see the place from our standpoint once."

Bowers laughed. "One'd think you'd been breaking stone, Ned."

"I've been stoking furnaces; I've been running errands; I've been clerking in a butcher shop, anyway."

"And five years from now," the other retorted, looking his friend up and down, "you'll be mighty glad you did it. I know it galls now

and then. I don't like the woods any more 'n you do."

"But you 're out of 'em now, eh ? "

"I think so, thank God. I guess I win."

"How do you mean ? "

"It 's a tie about the Fellowship at the worst, so they say. Stevenson plays clerk at the Corporation meetings now and then. I scared him into telling me."

"So Gardiner —"

"Not such a cinch for him, after all. But it 's a secret. Sure, now."

"Of course. Good work, Bill."

They shook hands constrainedly, too entirely of the Dale breed not to appear ill at ease in any outward demonstration of affectionate intimacy.

"Guess I 've got to go now," said the visitor. He looked back from the door for a second. "That 's all *right*, Bill. It 's—it 's the thing they ought to do."

Bowers sat down again at his desk. Mona Lisa's smile was enigmatical no longer. She was very glad for him.

A thousand dollars a year for three years, with a choice of Paris or one of the German schools ! And Stevenson had told him it was a tie, anyway. And he had such a tremendous advantage ! Was he not a hard worker; was he not

poor; was he not the kind of man Dale boasts that she cherishes, of all her children, closest to her heart? Last year it was Barker.

"He was a gold-bug beside me," said the man to his familiar on the wall. "I can't lose, I think, dear Madonna, if I try."

His smile matched hers. "And I'm very glad, too, Madonna, that I'm not as poor as I was. For—God! they'll have *one* year of comfort, poor old father, anyhow."

A hint of fear chased away his smile; then the steadiness came back.

"MY DEAR SON," the letter ran, "yours is to hand, and in reply would say your mother and I rejoice every day in our two good sons—Philip is going along your way, my boy—and bless you both so far away from us. Some day you will come back and stay a good long spell, I hope. And I pray Almighty to keep you in good health. Your mother is pretty good. The doctor says her hip won't ever be no better; but we don't complain. She sits up now very comfortable all day. I don't like to tell her about the mortgage, so say nothing about it when you write. I hope to raise the money somehow, though Scott is carrying all my paper he wants to, I'm afraid. I don't much blame McKee, for

the interest is a year behind, owing to the doctor's bills last Fall after your mother lamed herself, and the frost, as I wrote, killed nearly every bloom on the peaches. Times are hard; but there 's better ones coming, I hope. I 'm trying hard to sell the city lot your Uncle John left me; but the city is dead now in the real estate way, and John made a mistake when he bought it. Well, no more of this. Let us hear from you often.

"P. S. Don't worry, for they can't foreclose till August, anyhow. Your mother sends her love and tell him she will write next week."

The young man looked up from the letter to the lady on the wall. "There 's only one thing to do, Madonna."

Her smile was inscrutable. She had seen so many foolish men!

He leaned back in his chair. The warm air wrapped him; the June scent came in from the trees and the young grass. His work was done; the hard year was behind him. It seemed very far back to the January mornings and the dull rains of March, when his throat used to ache so and his feet were never dry. He could laugh now if he remembered the jeers of the kitchen-maids for whom he used to carry coal and ashes. It had been a good year.

"It 's a tie, anyhow," Stevenson had said. "They may call for revised marks. Your stand is about alike, I guess."

"They can't give it to anybody else—not to Gardiner," said Bowers, fiercely, impatient at his thought. "I 've got it cold, I know."

Then swept upon him the memory of things he had not seen in three years—a frame-house painted white, the series of weather-gray barns in the rear, a sweep of rolling plowed land covered with small trees, pink and white in June, in Winter seen red against the dull earth and muddy snow-banks. Then the Bowers peach-orchards were among the best in Delaware; now McKee, the brewer, was like to own them, and the old mother sat helpless in the big rocking-chair by the west window.

"Somebody ought to know that a man can work his way and save money," he remarked. "It would sound splendid at an alumni dinner."

It was not a great deal. The check would buy a five-carat diamond; it would carry a poor student through a year's living; it would pay a year's interest on a mortgage.

Mona Lisa smiled at another man's quixotic sentiment. They were as absurdly generous as they were absurd in most other ways. They were very amusing, these men.

"It's the only thing to do. They need it more than I do, anyhow. I can always get more, even if—"

"It's a tie," Stevenson had said. "They may ask for revised marks."

The pen dashed along resolutely, and stopped after ten lines to add a half-line of assurance that John Bowers still had an affectionate son. And it drove the assurance home rather definitely a moment later.

Bowers smiled rather grimly when he thought that the largest check he had ever seen was torn from his own book and sent off over his signature.

It had been a good year!

He hung out the window, sprawling on the rickety second-hand lounge, and pulled at a burnt corncob pipe. He was content at last; more still when he spied Paul hurrying along with a sheaf of note-books under his arm. It was sweet to think of coming victory.

"Hi, Gardiner!"

Paul checked himself, and looked up to see where the hail came from.

"Too pretty by half!" growled the unkempt one. "I'll spoil him. Don't run so fast."

"Don't set me such a pace, then," Paul retorted good-humoredly. "I'm not geared for hill-climbing in your company."

"And he jollies me, too," Bowers said to himself, adding aloud: "You look pretty dressy today, seems to me. Where you going?" This last bawled in thunder tones.

Paul waved his hand, twenty paces away already. He marched too briskly by half. Bowers called to the undergraduates who were spinning tops at the entrance of the great archway. "Way for Mr. Gardiner, youngsters! He's in a hurry. Room there, confound you!"

He rolled about, big with laughter. "A Panama hat and white flannels! Those won't get him through, if he *has* got a pull." Then, *fortissimo*:

"For all my fancy is upon Nancy,
Nancy Tallyho!"

"Shut up, Bowers!"

"Go to bed!"

"Less noise, freshman!"

The dormitory windows filled with heads. The undergraduates looked up, laughing a little constrainedly to see the record scholar making an exhibition of himself.

Paul's journey was a short one. He found her in the library. The awnings made it cool, and so dark that he had to wait a minute or two before he could make things out. Then he saw

that she was working at some catalogue work, with little piles of white, blue, and buff cards stacked in front of her. The flash of her welcoming smile contradicted the weariness in her somber eyes.

"You came too soon!" she cried, feigning to cover up her work. "Don't look!"

"For the professor?"

"No, sir."

"For—"

"No, sir. Go away."

He came nearer.

"Barbara!"

She surrendered. "I should have hidden your note-book. It betrayed me vilely."

He looked over her shoulder. Before her, on a kind of wire frame-thing, one of his scribbled note-books was stretched. The pages were scrawled with references and titles of books with their numbers in the university library, material of all sorts, ill arranged, tedious to make use of, a relict of times early in the year when slovenly undergraduate habits of work clung to him to hamper his new eagerness. And on the cards he saw six or seven of his notes, a color for each kind of work, a head-line for the special subject, a space for each reference or each date or each item of any sort under it, all in writing clear as

print, quaintly formal, delicately flowing—the writing of her grandmother. "Cards are the only thing, you know," she said, after she had explained a little. "A note-book is very unhandy."

"Barbara, you must n't do this. I can't let you, really," he protested.

"Are n't they right?"

"Of course. At least I think so. It is n't that."

"Well, then!" Her look lingered on him. "I can't do anything else, you see, to help."

"But—"

"Sit down and don't disturb me. I am *very* busy. If you talk I shall make mistakes, probably."

He made another little speech of protest. He seemed very much at fault, somehow. But, as she made no answer, he picked up two or three of the cards she had finished and carried them to a chair by the window. Her pen slid along, stopped, went more quietly over, putting in a date or a number. For five minutes neither of them made any sign. She did not raise her head till she drew a heavy blue pencil up and down a page of the note-book to show it was finished. Then she looked over at him, and he glanced up from one of the cards. He had a trick of biting his lip when anything puzzled him.

"They 're first-class, Babbie."

"Are they really all right? Tell me if they 're not."

"Oh, yes. There 's just one thing." Her sigh came so lightly that he did not perceive it. "Look back to the part that 's about Lylly. What 's his birth-date there?"

"1554."

"Humph! I thought that was it." He wrote in a substitute for something he scratched off the blue card.

Very slowly she drew out the note-book and turned over a page. She was at great pains to readjust the springs which held the book on the frame. Her head turned further from Paul than seemed natural, presuming that she wished her task directly under her eyes. And when the book at last was arranged she did not go on copying, but sat as though reading over and over the rubbed pencilings on the open pages. From the expression of her face you would have sworn she was waiting the pronouncement of a doom. Where usually a smile seemed just awaking, the line was nearly straight.

"Thank you very much, Babbie." Paul did not look up as he spoke. He seemed conscious that she had come to the end of her afternoon's stint, that was all. He kept scoring interroga-

tion-marks on the margins of the cards. "These are very nice — indeed."

"Are they exact? Are they dependable?" she asked bitterly. "Or—"

"Yes, yes," he protested. "Yes, indeed they are."

"I don't see why you correct them so, then," she went on, not sparing herself.

"Only in two or three places. I just wanted to be sure, you know. The — the note-book is absolutely blind in some places."

It was more than she deserved, Barbara thought. He might have deceived her, at any rate, pretending her poor little work was perfect. She had done her best, she had thought to please him, and he had looked on what she had done as though she had been a careless favorite clerk.

She had planned it very carefully. Her plan was so sure of success. She would help his work, so would she help him; so, Barbara whispered, would she help herself. For a moment the passion was beaten back, then Barbara did what she had not done since she was a baby.

"You — you must excuse me, Paul," she stammered, turning from him,—"I — I —"

He leaped to his feet, came to her side. Barbara stood perfectly still, looking down. The sobbing stopped in a sigh.

"You are ill?" he asked swiftly. "A glass of water, or a little—"

"No, no," she gasped. "I only—"

"Why, Babbie! Can't you tell me?"

She steadied herself, looked him bravely in the face. The beautiful smile crept back again. "Tell you?"

He asked more questions like a physician; suggested that she lie down or come for a walk.

"Has something troubled you, Babbie?" He was very friendly and soothing.

"No, no. It's only nonsense. I'm a bit tired, maybe. It's so hot, you see."

"It's those wretched note-books. You must n't, Babbie."

"Must n't?" She chose to mistake him. Her mood, too highly keyed, jangled. She went to the window, anywhere not to be under the dull query of his eyes. "Very well."

It was all over so. Not even in the work could she share ever so little,—the work she had started, she alone of all the world. She returned to the table, and took the note-book down from its place; she arranged her cards very carefully in separate packets—white, yellow, blue. Paul watched her curiously.

"That's right," he said. "Put 'em away, Babbie. Don't bother."

"Don't you *want* me to, Paul?" She went over to his chair and stood before him. She could not give up so easily. "Don't you *want* me to? Grandfather always has me make his copies. See! Look at that catalogue there in the drawers. It's the books. I did every one. Men ought n't to spend their days so, but I can; I'm only a woman, you see. And I'm very careful. I did n't make any real mistakes, did I?"

He laughed at her vehemence. "Far be it from me to say thee nay," he replied, and there showed sincerity in his tone. "The more the better. Only—"

She seemed about to speak again.

"Only don't get tired," he concluded. "And—and—"

"Then you really *like* to have me do them?"

"Ready now?"

"You must tell me if I make blunders," she said, resuming her place at the writing-table. "Honestly, Paul."

"I will, don't you fear. But I guess it'll be all right. Now let's see."

The work was different this time. There were some biographical data Paul wanted, and these facts he asked Barbara to take down from his dictation. It was a question of accuracy between

two authorities, and he must know the points they differed on.

At first things went very smoothly. The big biographical dictionary he had spread open on his knee repeated exactly what the gray paper monograph set down. The man's birth, of course. That was in the parish register. His going up to London — conjectural, anyway. "There's not a shred of real evidence for one date or the other, Babbie."

"Is n't there?" She leaned her cheek on her hand, eying him sideways as he pored with puckered forehead over one book and the other. A moment later she cried aloud:

"Paul! Spectacles? Oh, no!"

"It's a fact. Have to use 'em when the work's close at all. They're ever so comfortable."

"Paul! They're hideous!"

Her little gesture of horror seemed very funny. He laughed, he thought, with her, and paid no special heed when she changed her pose so as to bring the great bowl of pink azaleas between them. He was too busy to notice much, one way or another.

"This is nonsense!" he growled, reading further. "In the spring? In *April*? Why, the first performance was n't till November." He jumped up. "Where's Genest, Babbie?"

"The play-man? Over by the window."

"Never mind. I'm sure; I looked it up once."

"What's the matter?"

She had seen graybeards burn up energy this way, but never a young man. He talked very rapidly, heaping up denunciation on the German who was in error. He had said the play was printed six months before it was produced. "Think, Babbie! Scholarship! It damned every line he wrote thereafter. And you can't spend time correcting your authority's mistakes," cried Paul, frowning.

His mood altered swiftly into a kind of malice. "I'd like to review Herr Schwindt. I wonder how many mistakes like this he's guilty of. He's a mark, anyhow. Ever read any of his stuff? Of course you have n't. Well, well! Put him down, anyway, Babbie. April, 1686. *April!* Good Lord!"

She listened dumbly for five minutes longer. Then silence came down again while Paul read out minute points of fact or shades of opinion for her transcribing. His eyes reddened at the lids; the wrinkles on his forehead knotted and writhed in a hundred ways. His finger-tips drummed constantly on the arm of the chair. Once he looked up with a sigh of impatience, as though the rustle of her dress interrupted.

For an hour she watched him. It was as though each minute widened the stretch of road between them, she biding, he plodding on through the dust. And the staff he leaned on she had helped trim and shoe.

Once, ever so long ago,—two hours before,—she had resolved to follow. If she wished to share his lot, she must keep step with him, Barbara said. But, now she had seen what the way was like, she drew back. What was more, she could not bear that he should wander among deserts.

"Now let 's stop," said Paul, at length. "You must be dead, Babbie."

"Not a bit tired," she protested brightly. "I love to help."

He leaned back in his chair. "My good angel, Babbie! Do you know," Paul asked, "how entirely unselfish you are?"

"Unselfish!" He was wide of the mark. "Of course I want to help you all I can, Paul."

"Do you remember," he went on, "what you were up to when I met you in Paris?"

"The photographs?"

"And now you help me when you have a minute to spare from the little wood-carver or the others you 're so good to." A sudden emotion shook him. "I 'll be able some day to prove how grateful I am, Babbie."

She saw the effect of the battle on him. The young man shut his tired eyes; his arms hung limply; then the strained nerves cracked, and Paul hid his face, bowing over, while his broad shoulders shook.

For a moment Barbara sat motionless. Then, with a little cry, though all her training, all her young-ladyhood forbade her, Barbara, sitting beside Paul on the sofa, drew his hands down and kissed him on the forehead, soothing him like one of her little urchins down by the harbor. Here was no daring, no pretty defiance of the law. Her heart ached for his tired struggles, so broken and haggard; her kiss was cold as the water she might have carried to him between the shocks of the tournament.

"I 'm so sorry," she whispered as to the other man, and she made the little phrase vital.

"It 's 'most over," groaned Paul. "Then a long rest, Babbie."

She was on her feet now. A sudden stupid embarrassment drove her away, like a Diana who feared her own rashness. She halted before she reached the door, and held out her hands to him.

"O Paul!"

"Yes?"

"Be sure it 's going to pay. Be sure all this is worth your scholar's reward."

"What do *you* think?" he asked hollowly.

"The world's full of great things," she replied.

"The real world, Paul. Out yonder."

And then she fled away, leaving him to a thousand thoughts.

A time of waiting followed. From her place Barbara, in company with sorrow, watched the traveler on his way, until at last, seeing that he could not hear her calling to him, she set her silver horn to her lips. Its note would fare far on the June air, she told herself. The young wind would carry it; the young things of the world about him would echo its bugling.

It was the first time in her life. It had seemed to her not right to wind the little mocking calls that other girls were ever trying. Her witch-notes were those of the deer or the dove, clear as nature and as sweetly loud and shrill. It would carry, she prayed open-eyed, far along the dusty, dreary highway.

"The professor does n't like that dress, you know, Miss Babbie," said Hannah, a little disturbed at the directions she received. "It's so—so—well, it's an awful *showin'* dress, Miss Babbie."

"Don't I look well in it, Hannah?"

"Yas, 'm, you suttinly do. But—"

"Well, then!"

The old negress grumbled off, came back, and went down a half-hour later to tell the kitchen how Miss Babbie was n't a bit like every day; how she would dress as though she was going to a party, "only kinder extra-fash'nable"; how she did n't seem old Hannah's little girl at all that night.

No more was she. It was a woman going to battle for her right; it was young beauty going to claim a kingdom in exchange for her dower.

Dinner was over; the professor had excused himself on the plea of some small work to do.

"I'll join you later," he said. "Run along now. Don't go till I see you, Gardiner."

"No, sir; certainly not."

In the rear of the house was a broad, low piazza, overlooking the garden where cherishing care kept vigorous the formal box-borders and the pear trees trained against the brick boundary-walls. There came a cool sound from the splashing of the little fountain. A couple of orange Japanese lanterns glowed dully among the great palms grouped at one end. Their dim light was on the deep lounge, piled high with pillows.

"Let 's sit here," Barbara said, over her shoulder. "What a night, Paul!"

He joined her, perching on the railing, as she stood for a moment looking up from the piazza's edge to the sky. The great summer stars blazed.

"They are very friendly," she went on.
"Which will you follow?"

"Choose for me," he answered idly enough, laughing a little. "Which travels highest and furthest, Babbie?"

"Which is the steadiest, you mean, I think."

She leaned forward ever so little. Her weight was partly against his knee. The yellow lantern glow behind her silhouetted the perfect curve of bare shoulder and throat. She did not move. He could almost feel the come and go of her breath.

"A constant star, by all means," said Paul, slowly following her upward look. "The north?"

"Too cold by half. Too like a diamond. There's no fire there, somehow."

"Which, then? Show me my star, Babbie."

Her look came down swiftly from the skies to meet his, lingered while one might count five slowly. He could not see, but even in the darkness Paul felt her eyes holding him fast, and he let them. His face was very serious as they crossed the piazza to the seat under the dim lanterns. Like old Hannah, he felt that this was no more the Barbara he had known; though, for the life of him, Paul could not explain the change. He told her so.

"How do you mean — different?" she asked, her white teeth flashing. She lay far back on the deep lounge, pillows all around her, every splendid long line of her body suggested under the close black dress, whose somberness made the bare beauty of her round arms and white shoulders perfect. She made no move under his stare; and when he slowly sank down beside her, still watching her,—for she was very lovely,—she smiled, and for a moment laid her head back on the great velvet pillow. "How different, Paul?"

"I don't know. It's the usual puzzlement, I suppose. I wish you could see yourself, Babbie."

"Nonsense!" She did not stir, however. She was looking beyond him now, very quiet, happy, one would say, in something she was thinking about. At length she laughed ever so little. The man grew angry in a second. And because his childish, persistent questioning—he would know what she was laughing about—showed like a glass his jealous fear of her having a thought she would not tell him, Barbara laughed again. The old Paul was not quite dead, she thought.

"It's something I've been saying or doing?" he asked querulously. "Is it—"

"It's nothing at all, at *all*," she replied, chang-

ing like the wind or the sun. "If I laughed, it was because I was pleased, I suppose. And I *am* pleased,—also proud." Her gaiety was strained a little; she spoke with an airiness. "I am proud of my young scholard, Mr. Gardiner. You are quite a genius, I suppose, really."

"I know to whom things are owing," he broke in. "Barbara, I 'm on my knees to you every day. Take the other afternoon there. It was so—so sweet in you to bother with me and my note-books, and all. You 're *such* a help!"

"No, no, Paul." She could not hear this, for the remembrance stabbed her. That afternoon had shown to her a bent, soulless machine, fed on air she could not breathe. The sigh he drew a moment later gave her a wished-for opportunity.

"Tired?"

"A little. I never worked before, Babbie."

Silence for a minute. "You 're satisfied with it all? The hours over things whose life went out years ago, all the worry over the things the rest of the world counts so very tiny?"

"*Hoti's* business? The Grammarian got a noble burial."

"So he did." She ventured greatly. "And his burial was the only event in his life that the world ever heard of or cared about."

It was a speech to bring about results. She

dared scarcely breathe till he answered. She waited a whole year, it seemed.

"You believe that, Babbie?"

"Partly." Her voice sank to a lower key. "I've learned a good deal about scholarship this year. And it isn't as fine a thing as I thought."

The world tumbled about his ears. He had no choice from the thousand questions which surged to his lips. She went on, a bit quicker than before, speaking not at all to the man beside her, but to the darkness of the garden. She told the shadows the story of the young man turned to stone.

"That's the curse of it, Babbie. I know. I've seen it so often. I hoped, though—"

"I did n't think it would be so with you," she said sadly. "But it *is* so, Paul! You'll let me say this?" she added. "I—we—"

"And you cared!" A new set of thoughts rushed over him like a spring tide. "You cared!"

She smiled up at him from her pillows. "My friends are my friends, Paul. I can't take them other than seriously. It would n't be right to sit by and see them do things that are a pity. Would it?"

"Tell me more!" he demanded. "I've been a blind fool, Babbie!"

"Not that. You 've studied pretty hard, that 's all."

He took a couple of turns up and down the piazza. It was just as he had feared any time in the last few weeks. He was exchanging a living for a dead world. To be learned, to be a leader, to sit with the gods — truly a fine thing, did one care to pay the price. That she had urged him to it seemed to make no difference. She knew as little then as he.

"Is it all *true*, Babbie?" His face was lined with a dozen emotions as he stood again in the circle of light.

She told him then of the change in him, very simply, very coolly, like a friend. It was all very impersonal, for she had fought back the tremor in her voice. She ended with a description of the haggard, selfish man who had bullied her that afternoon in the library.

"I did n't."

"You did, Paul. I 'm sorry. I think I ought to tell you honestly, though."

"Is it always like that? Am I going on? You 've seen bookmen all your life. Do they seem so dead, so dreary — all of them?"

She could not reply then. She dared not have him recall the splendid old man in the house. Her heart stopped beating.

"Tell me!"

"You know as well as I," she made shift to say. She hesitated a moment. "Paul, I should hate to see you lose it all. I think," said Barbara, resolutely, "I did very wrong last fall when I urged you to go in for studying and teaching and all."

She had no care now. She was fighting a battle.

"Just think," she continued. "You'll go off to Germany for three long years—all alone, Paul; then you'll come back, and by great good luck you'll get a small place here or a bigger place out West; work, work, work over the books till you have to consciously go out to enjoy the *real* things. And nobody will ever see you, and you'll get so you won't care after a little, just like Mr. Scott or Dr. Mayhew. Paul, you must n't do that!"

At that moment he could believe she told him true. His shoulders were still galled with his harness. He had struggled for the year and had nothing to show but an array of facts and some generalizations ready made for him. He was forgetting how to sleep. It would be only a year lost, and what was that out of a man's life? A year, a winter!

"What to do then?" he asked dully.

She waited.

"I am a great bother, Babbie," he went on, misreading her silence. "But you always help me clear things up so."

Still she made no sign.

"Tell me what 's best. I want ever so much advice."

"I 'm afraid to make another mistake, Paul. I 'd hate to plan anything wrong. You must do it alone. But—"

He turned to her, trying to read her eyes in the half-darkness. "You 'll help, Babbie?"

"I 'm a poor helper, Paul." She looked away.

"You care, Babbie?"

She laid her hand on his. "You doubt it?" asked Barbara.

She had checked him on his course. He was standing still, looking back along the way. The dust choked, the sun seemed to smite him down. She watched him, straining her eyes. And when he stopped, with her elfin music in his ears, Barbara's heart cried out with happiness. Let her wind her horn again—let it tell him clearly what prize lay in store for him alone if he turned into the path she could show him, and she saw her happiness made perfect.

"I think you are my best friend, Babbie."

"I want things to go right with you, Paul. But I make lots of mistakes. You must n't think me so very wise."

"I don't." They laughed together. "But I do think you tell me what seems best. And that's why you're — so much to me."

She murmured some little sentence or other.

"A splendid, loyal friend!"

"Loyal, certainly, Paul."

She did not mean that exactly. Nor would the world, who thinks it friendly to help a young man along his chosen course, have called her action that night the part of friendship. But the world would not have let her answer as she wished.

They were so earnest in their talk that they were unaware of Hannah's presence till she came within the circle of light. The good soul thought it very unfortunate that she should have to interrupt them at all — they seemed so comfortable, she told her kitchen afterward, so her approach had been very slow. The slower, perhaps, for the longer sight she won in that way.

"Professor Hare's compliments," her suave voice broke in.

"What is it, Hannah?" Barbara sat up straight.

"P'fessor's compliments, Miss Babbie."

"Well?"

"And he 'd like for to see Mr. Paul."

For one of the few times in her life, Hannah saw somebody delay to answer her master's call; and she was not very indignant about it, either.

"I must go, I suppose." Paul rose at last.

"Naturally." Barbara laughed like a brook.
"Of course."

"He said he wanted to see me," Paul went on, seeking excuses. It was something quite new, as Hannah observed. He looked back just as he turned away. "He will be terribly shocked."

"You 're going to tell him?"

To trouble her dearest grandfather! To disregard the professor's advice! Barbara shrank away.

"Certainly."

"But you must n't decide things too quickly, Paul. Please don't. I—I—"

The picture of the old man's disappointment unnerved her. She had not thought of it before, and, pictured by her fancy, the vision seemed very dreadful. She hoped, quite unashamed, that Paul would say nothing of her share in changing his mind.

He reassured her. "I 'll do it very carefully, if I can, Babbie. He must n't think —"

"No, no, Paul."

"It's my own affair, anyway."

She thanked him with a gesture and watched him into the house. She thought no shame to listen, but heard nothing after her grandfather's greeting to Paul before the latter passed into the library. She sank back on her cushions, thrilling with a dozen emotions. Her grandfather's first distress? That was something. Would he suspect what, as in a rush of flaming light, Barbara saw now was her treachery to him? That made her breath come quick. Last of all recurred the remembrance of the man she loved, and his winning back to life—real life, young life. Then followed other thoughts and quick dreams, of a kind so different, and so swiftly on the heels of her first dismay, that before Paul had taken his seat he heard Barbara singing lightly.

X

THE OLD ENGLISH MANUSCRIPT

PROFESSOR HARE listened too, even while he was talking, so did not much blame Paul for looking past him to the door. If the boy answered a bit at random, it made no difference. Perhaps the professor found himself speaking a bit at random, too. Barbara's voice made one first listen, then think and feel.

There was no hurry. They could wait. They could take all night before the great event came to pass. For a year had it been preparing; not a day but what the professor had planned concerning it, deciding, hesitating, testing again and again. That they listened to Barbara's singing lightly out yonder was nothing at all. The delay made the surprise more savory; it prepared the coming of the great event the more formally. Let Paul listen, if he chose. He would be the more amazed when he heard the song his Master was going to sing him. Let him dream, said the

professor, searching through and through the look in the boy's eyes, his awakening would be to a keener delight in the realities his Master would show to him.

The wild little song vanished into the night, but Paul made no movement. For a full moment he sat waiting its return flight, his eyes still toward the doorway into the hall. He was looking his highest. Barbara would have liked to see him then.

"And Schönberg has been in very far from good repute ever since," said the professor, finishing his tale a little sooner than he meant to. It was not very interesting, he thought himself. He could not blame Paul for not heeding him very closely. And Barbara had been a distraction.

"He knows about Greek vases, does n't he?" Paul asked. He looked at his Master from far away. The night had been so full of witchery.

"Nonsense! Schönberg, the Romance philology man. Don't you know of him?"

"Oh, yes, certainly. I 'm very stupid. I 'd forgotten for a moment."

"Well!" cried Professor Hare. "Yes, yes." He paused a moment. "And how are things going, boy? First-class, eh?"

"Oh, yes," Paul sighed. "Very well, thank you, sir. Very well, indeed."

"So. I 'm very glad." It was probably a wave of fatigue after the day's work which dulled the boy's voice. Perhaps one last test would not be amiss? The professor hesitated, then fenced, hating his foolish doubt. "You 've had a hard trial this year, lad."

"It 's been — an experience," Paul replied.

"Yes?" The Master waited. He looked away, for the clouds seemed to hang so low that the lightning soon must flare. Or was it only fog?

"I 've discovered ever so many things. How people work, among others. I never guessed at that before."

"Like it?"

"Yes, sir. Yes, indeed." He continued, speaking very rapidly, blushing finely. "You know, of course, that — that I don't *have* to work unless I want to; but I would n't stay idle for anything. No, *sir*. That I 've learned this year, anyhow."

"You 're a good Yankee, lad."

"I hope so, sir. I ought to be."

Here was something gained, at all events. The professor took heart. The storm drew around, he thought. There was no danger. He knew his man, said the professor.

An hour went by. It was a luxury, the Master found, to prolong what he was doing. He drank in, as the zest of a golden vintage, the

changing moods of hope and diffidence and satisfaction and ambition which crossed the scholar's face. He told what he had to say better even than he had hoped for. Long planned, there was not a moment of the hour whose effect was not as perfect as calculated. There were the tales of the old masters and their 'prentice-scholars; there was the confession of his own age, the expressed confidence in the other's youth. In a dozen ways the old man came to tell the young that the work of his life was that night placed in the hands of the junior.

"Now I will tell you the conditions."

"The con—"

"Yes, lad. It is n't a gift. You're going to earn it, youngster."

The traveling scholarship won,—and of that there could be no doubt,—there followed the years in Paris or Germany or Oxford; there were vigils, so much to learn and use—the difficult tools all yet to come; journeys, retreats, celibacy.

Paul looked toward the doorway again. If the Master expected a sign, he received none.

"The scholar's life, the great life, Paul!"

"I see. Yes, sir."

"Look here, now. I have something to show you."

The professor opened a drawer, from it took a package tied very tightly with tape, and pressed it in Paul's hands. It was three sheets of vellum, browned and stained.

"This shall be first," he cried. "It has never been seen till now, Paul."

His enthusiasm swept him away. "From the little monastery in Bulgaria I brought it five years ago. From Bulgaria, boy, and it's Wessex dialect. Incredible, eh? A poem. The date? Its character? These are for you, boy—yours to find out. I cannot say just what I want to."

It was the first time in twenty years that Professor Hare faltered in his speech.

The red mounted higher and higher in Paul's face as he fumbled with the pieces of manuscript. It was small wonder he was embarrassed. Never before had an American student been given such a chance—the undertaking of a work which Europe's greatest scholars would envy. The mantle had been placed on his shoulders.

For five minutes there was not a word said, hardly a gesture made. Then Paul laid the three sheets together and fastened the tape about them. He had not even carried them to the light.

"No thanks!" laughed the Master, anticipating. "Not a word. I am getting too old. I look for and find a worthy successor, a lieutenant. It's

your right, lad. The honor is great, I acknowledge; but you can carry it. You're going to be the very best scholar America has produced, and you shall start your career splendidly. Don't thank me at all. I am entirely selfish, boy; for you're mine — all mine. It was old Hare that had the making of you."

Paul turned wax-white.

"It will take not a year, not five years. It will be slow; but our world will watch you and will crown you, boy. An edition of a manuscript like this! Not easy. But worth while. Yes, a long, slow time; but a result."

"A result?"

"What do you mean?"

"Yes, sir." Paul looked the old man in the face. "I — I was wondering."

"What do you mean, Gardiner?" The Master's tone cut like a knife.

"I don't think I can do it, sir."

"Eh?"

"I can't attempt it, sir."

The professor breathed again. He was half prepared for this. For a moment he had feared vaguely something terrible, noting his pupil's listless bearing, the indefinable barrier that some half-discerned adverse feeling raised between the great work and its acceptance. But when Paul

declared he *could* not try the task, was not up to it, the old man only laughed delightedly once more. Of course it seemed beyond his boy's strength. The professor understood perfectly. That was nothing at all. How often had he himself felt dumb and clumsy before some great thing,—and not so long ago, either.

"I think you *can* do it," he retorted. He flung his arms up in a great embracing gesture. "My happiest night! My mind's son, my heir at last! I have dreamed it how often!"

Through his exaltation, across leagues of sunlight, he heard his boy murmuring something—acceptance, promise, confession, hope, some vague form of words half heard, yet sweet to hear. The old man did not pretend to listen. He was hearing the sonorous Latin of the Oxonian who should confer on his boy the great English degree. He saw the color of the academic costumes, felt the glow of the June sun down through the roof of the Sheldonian. How dusty and woody it smelt! The next moment he was hearing old Lund's rapid fire of comment under his garden arbor over the *Pilsener*. A dear old place, Halle! One could get much there.

Then he guessed that Paul asked some question, and, looking at him, saw his eyes big and troubled.

"What did you say, boy?"

"About the end of it all, sir. It can't be like your life — all of what the scholars do. What do the others come to — the hundreds and hundreds who delve and grind and live on dust for fifty years? What's the end of most scholars' work? Do they accomplish much, sir, really?"

"The end!" exclaimed the Master. "The end!"

"Yes, sir."

"You ask?"

"Yes, sir. I am not very happy. I—I—"

"Gods above, Paul! You don't mean to quit!"

The professor towered over him. He seemed almost to threaten a blow.

"I must be honest, sir. I'm trying to find out things." He grew more reckless as his temper rose to meet his senior's anger. "Don't you see, sir? You propose a great honor. And I thank you on my knees for it. But—but I must be sure it's the honor I can support with all my heart all my life. There, I've said it now! It's been on my lips any time this fortnight."

He went on breathlessly. One great master survives; a score grow to stocks and stones. Professor Hare is one of America's greatest men;

a dozen of the college world count past participants.

"That's not for me, sir. God forgive me for wounding you. But I don't dare risk it."

The old man returned to his chair. He had turned to ice.

"I will not detain you, Gardiner."

"But, sir—"

"No more, I beg. I—I will write when I have anything to say."

Paul rose. His lip bled a little where he had bitten it. He looked back from the door as his Master spoke again.

"Do me the favor of telling Barbara that I wish to speak with her."

That was all. The old man sat still as a stone, his eye very cold, his lips close set under the great white beard.

But when Barbara crept in she found her grandfather sobbing like a baby.

On the floor, where Paul had dropped it, the priceless manuscript lay unregarded.

Paul could never remember just how he came out to the street. There was a quick glimpse of Barbara and her splendid smile as she answered his call; but if they had exchanged any words, he could not recall them afterward. He seemed to feel that his Master said nothing to him when

he mumbled some good-by or other; he had a deal of trouble opening the door, about which somebody—possibly Hannah—aided him. Then Paul found himself walking swiftly toward the Campus. He began to think coherently as he passed under the arch erected to the young Rough-Rider by his classmates.

He turned to the right and followed the Fence to its west end, away from the crowd of juniors who were singing their very best. The glee-club must be there, Paul thought, as he passed by. He hoped no one would recognize him; he wanted to smoke all alone, out of the talk of college politics, prospects of winning the race at New London, the life after graduation. His nerves twittered with what he had gone through that day.

For an hour or so he sat there, perched on the topmost rail. The singing grew fitful; the calls from the dormitory windows for "More music!" went almost unheeded. Connelly, the ponderous Campus policeman, began his rounds. Paul saw the glitter of his badge as he lumbered by. Almost all the lights went out in the buildings, except those up and down the stairways. It was so quiet he could hear the hissing of the arc-light half-way down the Campus.

The spell of the night and the place, as for so

many of us, wrought on him for peace. How often, like Paul, have we sat out there under the stars and the elms, telling our doubts and our troubles to the great spirit-mother, whose answer dwells in the calm and the age and the homeliness of our surroundings. Her life is so full she can reflect all our moods; young, so that she can laugh with us; ancient, so that her counsel is a sage's. Speak to her what ye will, she has the answer ready; listen only, and she will sing you her old war-song of action, of life to meet, of things to accomplish; she will croon a slumber-song when ye are weary.

Nowadays we affect to laugh a little at the Campus by moonlight. We are workers or we are playing hard; at any rate, not sentimental like our fathers.

It is a great pity, one would say.

Paul sat there on the Fence until out of the confusion within him there emerged, little by little, something like singleness. The thought he followed was linked very closely with the fatigue of his whole body and the smarting of his eyelids. He had only to use his sense, Paul told himself, to confirm what Barbara had told him. He knew he was overworked already, and what a galley life like that of the last nine months would do for him it was easy to guess. And all

for so very little, since to become a Professor Hare was given to one in a hundred or a thousand.

Barbara! Always right, whether her enthusiasm—how quaintly it sat on her!—urged him to try the scholar's life, or her good sense bade him have a care not to strain tugging in galling traces! It was not easy for her, either, to tell him what she had. She adored her grandfather and prized learning highest of all things. The scene in the study! The rejected crown! Had he been hasty? No, not a bit! The prize was not worth the running. And this reminded him that it would be only fair to his rival if he gave formal notice that he was no longer a competitor for the fellowship.

Such a good, loyal friend, that Barbara!

He admired her, Paul told himself, as much as any girl he had ever seen. How she must have looked down on him when he lay about, thinking to be in love with her—this fine creature who made work and efficiency her idols!

He remembered her good advice, her friendly interest. But Paul forgot the great eyes that embraced him, the hand that for a moment rested on his shoulder. She had lain on her cushions so near him he could feel her breathing; her head was back, her throat was bare; but to Paul her

whiteness might have been marble, her breath a south wind in Spring.

The chimes were clanging the three quarters when Paul came out again, waving the white envelop so as to dry the ink of the address. From the Green sounded uncertain singing and volleyed laughter. The students who had spent their evening at the various saloons were beginning the voyage home; and from the noise Paul judged that some were being piloted and towed to their moorings.

He hurried along the street which separates the one side of the old Campus and the Green, heading for the great archway under which was the mail-box, watching the first of the groups of the jolly drunkards, which had laid a course at right angles to his, but meant to converge at the same point if all went well. From the noise they made, Paul guessed they had not learned how to drink discreetly; they sounded like freshmen or a lot of grinds too poor to get drunk as often as their richer classmates, and so inexperienced.

Just at the archway they came together.

“Gardiner!” one of them whooped. “Old Paul Gardiner!” and began to curse himself vigorously.

“Why, little Paulie! Is n’t it very late for you?”

At another time Paul would not have minded. Indeed, it was not for him to find fault with a drunken man. But to-night he was very much annoyed. He had been face to face with great things for hours, and the roisterers were sweaty and smelt of gin. They hugged him tight and sang in his ear. He dropped his letter.

"Look out, Ned; I've lost my letter. Let go, will you?"

That one of the four who seemed really sober, though he behaved like the rest, snatched the envelop up from the pavement.

"This it?"

"Yes. Give it here, Bowers, will you?"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Put it in the box, of course. Stop your fooling, Ned. Stop it!"

The others had joined hands and circled slowly round him, wailing sentiment.

"Mr. Alfred R. Brewer, Nineteen Carter Hall," Bowers read slowly. He held the envelop high, so as to catch the shine of the electric light at the top of the arch. He looked at Paul, sober in a second. "What's that for, Gardiner?"

"I'd tell you if I could. But these Indians—"

The big man tore the ring asunder. "On your way, fellow-students! I'll join you in a second."

The drunken men obeyed him far enough to loose Paul. But they clung to the high iron grille which half closed the archway, and continued to sing.

"You might as well know, I suppose." Paul was surprised at the steadiness of his voice. The decision was further away than he had supposed. He felt not a quarter of the emotion he had promised himself was in store for him when he should come to tell the world the great change in his plans. He felt mainly the irritation of Bowers's personality—that inexplicable dislike the man always aroused in his breast. To examine the address on the letter, and so to anger him, was the kind of thing Bowers always did, Paul remembered, when they came together. He was conscious of deserving a long credit-mark for doing a kindness to the brute. "You *ought* to know—the first of the crowd."

The other dropped his chin on his breast and peered at Paul under drawn brows. He hugged himself tight.

Paul took a step toward the letter-box. "You read the address?"

"Brewer's on the Fellowship Committee, is n't he?"

"Chairman, I believe." Paul smiled a little. "I'm sending him my resignation."

"You are doing—what?" Bowers fell back, then sprang forward and caught Paul by the shoulders. His giant grip made the other wince.

"What d' you mean?"

"Just that. Let go! I'm no longer in the field, Bowers. The fellowship's yours, if you want it."

The other backed away. For a minute he said nothing. Then a smile flickered across his face, kindled, roared out in a peal of laughter that shook him as a gale shakes an oak. He turned to his mates, who were singing still. "Come here, boys; come here. Lord, why can't you listen! *Stop that noise!*!"

He seized a pair of them, and danced uncouthly forward and back, over to Paul and away again, roaring out the theme of some brassy march-tune. Then he stood still to get his breath, and began to speak again, the drunken men applauding like mad.

"So your pull was n't strong enough, hey, sport? So you could n't stand the pace, hey, little race-horse? So you're going to quit because you're kind of afraid the old man might beat you! It would n't look nice to catch a licking from Bowers,—not a bit. What *would* dear Professor Hare say to his pet pupil! So we'll go back and sit down, will we? Oh!"

The drunken men gravely proposed a cheer for Bowers.

"The old man beats 'em all, does n't he, though!" the giant went on, mad enough. "He wins in a canter. And Mr. Gardiner is left at the three-quarters! Oh, *poor* Mr. Gardiner!"

Paul answered never a word. Bowers changed his tone a little. "The fact is, you 're not cut out for a scholar, Gardiner. And I 'm really glad you 've found it out. The Lord hates a quitter, of course; but you 're in the wrong business, that 's all. And the sooner you 're out the happier you 'll be." He went on, splendidly complacent in his conquest, telling the conquered how terrible the odds had been against him. "There was n't a chance for you from the first, Gardiner. Old Hare turned your head, I guess. Of course I don't like to boast," the giant added blandly, "but you could n't have won that fellowship from me in a hundred years."

"That 's so, is it?" Paul asked. He spoke very humbly.

"Ask anybody. It really is n't for me to say, you know," laughed Bowers.

The collector came through the archway; the mail-box clanked open.

"There 's one more to go, Mr. Postman," remarked Bowers. "Eh, Gardiner?"

Paul looked slowly from his rival to the man in the gray uniform, and back again. "You say you can win the Washington fellowship, anyhow? Whether I stay in or not?"

The postman snapped the box together again. Bowers laughed easily, then nodded. "Better mail it, Gardiner. It's your easiest way."

"You think you can beat me? Sure?"

"Sure."

Paul nodded to the waiting carrier, who turned off grumbling. He waited till he was out of hearing. Then he tore the letter into tiny pieces, which the wind whisked away high in the air.

"What's that for?" asked Bowers.

"I'll take my licking, I guess," Paul replied slowly. "Good night."

There was much for Barbara to write in the little diary that night. The hours since noon had meant much to her. New thoughts, terrifying, thrilling, dazzling, had crowded on her. Her life had begun anew.

She could not start at once. The scene with her grandfather still burned in her brain long after she had left him in the study. For an hour she had listened while the old man bitterly declaimed against the boy who had declined the gift of the Master; she had to answer when he looked up for her sympathy; and the tears had

blinded when her grandfather's voice broke in, telling his disappointment, for she loved him fondly.

"I am a traitor," cried Barbara, tearfully, to her mirror. "He does not guess I am to blame for it all."

Should she tell him?

"I can't," she wailed, hiding her face. "I can't do that." And—he won't be angry when he finds out,—when Paul—and I tell him—together."

Then she remembered how that day had not yet dawned—and how, for all she knew, the man she loved with all her heart was yet to hear her calling; then how sweet it was that he could not fail to hear!

All this Barbara lived over again in the half-hour after she had gone to her room. She had laid off her dress for a soft wrapper, and dragged the low Madeira chair to the window, for the air of the June night was as soft as noon's.

A rather uncertain singing came to her from somewhere on the Green, a quavering tenor struggling till the last three notes, when he came to land and bleated confidently, some nondescript barytones bawling out the melody, one distinguished from the others by being truer. Barbara smiled a little, thinking that men were silly

creatures. She listened to the clock striking the three quarters; then to the singers once more, who had ascended the slope of the Green and crossed the street to where the great archway must be. Their voices suddenly dulled as they passed under it. She thought it a little strange that the sound of the singing did not cease altogether, until she realized that the singers must have halted for some reason or other.

From following these honest souls Barbara's thoughts leaped to the life and the work at the harbor side of the city, where she had seen drunkenness of a sort different from the silliness of the fellows yonder under the archway. (They were raising the college yell now.) That was something to reckon with. That was a work for a man — Paul, perhaps? Would it not be splendid for the two of them to shoulder the wheel together! A man's work, showing people how to live! There was Father Moore and Father Russell. But Paul could not be of the brotherhood. Barbara laughed in her next breath. Well, there or elsewhere, let it be a life together, the slums or the Riviera. But something like the former for choice, for theirs must be such a full life, such a fine life.

More ragged cheering and singing from the distant archway brought her back to the present.

She was glad Paul was—different from that sort. They were cheering one Bowers, and by an odd twist the suggestion seemed to confirm her in the good sense of the course she had urged on Paul. The scholar's life begun by beating Bowers for a fellowship!

She closed the window and opened the desk to write up her diary.

One by one she recorded every event of the day, and more slowly set down exactly what they all meant to her. The candles had guttered down half their length before she laid her pen away.

“I am doing what I would n't have thought possible. In two ways. I am working as hard as I can to upset grandfather's wishes, and letting him think that I am still helping him by helping Paul with his studies. And I am trying to keep P. from a work he 's very earnest about because I want him all to myself.” The writing grew very tremulous here, and the first of the book's pages showed a blot. “But I cannot help it, for I love him dearly; and, oh, Paul, do come to me soon, soon, soon!”

She had laughed a little when she began, but the tears choked her before she put the book

back in the desk. And when the late moon looked into her room it found Barbara lying with her face in her pillows, crying as though her heart would break.

Breakfast found the air heavily charged. Hannah's eyes rolled, and she shook her head sagely when she reported to the kitchen how quiet the professor sat, looking out the window more than on his plate, and how white Miss Babbie was. There was something very wrong somewhere.

"Is it in the letters?" hazarded Martha.

"No," Hannah replied. "They done look funny from de minute they sot foot in de room."

"You 'd better carry in those eggs sudden-like. Open de do' quick on 'em, Hannah. Likely yo' 'll get somethin' to guess from, anyhow."

The two were talking about some great sorrow the professor had suffered, and Hannah felt a bit embarrassed at seeing her master for once without his dignity. She had never guessed before that he could look like crying, so she fidgeted about the sideboard when he put his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Perhaps it 's for the best," whispered Barbara. "Is n't it well for him to find out now instead of later?" She grew bolder. "Suppose Paul had gone away, grandfather, and all at once, when he couldn 't stop because he 'd have wasted so

much time—suppose he 'd grown tired and all, and—and wished he 'd done something else instead? He might, you know. And that would be *so* much worse."

"I was so sure of him, Babbie." He had repeated this twenty times.

"I know it, dear. I wish, for your sake—"

He looked at her sharply. "Not for his?"

"I hate your disappointment."

"His will be greater some day. He 's putting behind him an honor that not a student in America would n't ask for on his knees. Does he realize who I am, and who he is? 'No, I thank you!' I might have offered him a cigar. But it was a life's career he declined, the young fool."

She waited awhile. "You think he won't ask a second chance?"

"He won't get it." The old man's eyes lightened. "His scholar's work is finished. Finished, Barbara!"

She prayed fervently that he might not perceive her thoughts, for she felt her heart's triumph show in her cheeks and eyes. They had won! She had won! But she could not help going to the old man and kissing him. She seemed vaguely to be thanking him for something. She seemed to feel her lover surrendered

by him who had kept him from her. The scholar's work was finished, he had said.

The old man drew her close. "It's too bad, too bad," he murmured. "He is consoling me!" she cried, and shrank from his embrace, for she could not be so false as that would make her. "It was you that started it all, honey."

She almost cried aloud with the pain.

"It was you who worked and hoped with me, eh?"

"Yes, grandfather, I—"

He hugged her close, not perceiving how rigid she held herself. And then, after a long time, the old man whispered: "We wish the boy well, Babbie?"

She sprang up. Could he have guessed? "Grandfather!"

"Another chance, perhaps? Let him say he's sorry?"

She turned away. He was urgent.

"I do not think Paul wants another chance," she answered brokenly. Then she stopped, for Hannah came into the room from the hall.

"It's Mr. Paul," said Hannah.

Professor Hare glanced up, hesitated, pushed back his chair. Hannah's eyes rolled up; then her black face became expressionless.

"You will see him?" Barbara asked swiftly

She had not dared to hope that Paul would follow up his victory so soon. She did not know that her voice rang almost triumphantly and cruelly.

"He asked 'spressly fo' de professor," Hannah added. The women might have been pleading a cause.

"Tell him—" Professor Hare's hand was shaking as he picked up an envelop from the heap of mail at his elbow and tore it open. His face flushed dully. He read blindly half-way down the sheet, looked up, went on reading, looked up again, and hitched his chair back to the table. "Tell Mr. Gardiner that I beg to be excused," he blurted out.

Barbara was looking at her plate. "You're going to send him off?" She traced a little design on the table. Paul might be long in coming back after such a rebuff. And so much was to be done! Last night had been only a beginning. "Perhaps—"

"Well?" The professor could not help waiting for her opinion.

"Perhaps he wants to tell you he's sorry." She followed her first impulse, which told her this was her only way to see him, it might be for a long time. But if what she suggested was true! The thought tripped up the heels of the other.

Barbara sprang to her feet irresolutely. "He—he does n't deserve much consideration, I think," she went on glibly enough, though her face was scarlet. It was best not to risk what another talk with her grandfather might do. "He must not come in," she said. He—he had acted badly.

"But suppose he is sorry? It may have been only silly pique, or haste, or fatigue, or—"

"You 're very generous, I think," she rejoined. "He is about the first man to decline your favors."

He eyed her very closely, not quite able to explain her. This was not his Barbara. A trace of the air he had noticed the night before clung about her still—provoking, baffling, half strange.

"He ought to have a chance, Babbie."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"The boy does n't know what he 's declining."

"No?" Then she must teach him anew, she told herself.

The old man looked at her. "Have you and Paul talked of this matter, Barbara? Did you know of his—feeling before he came to me last night?"

So the question had come that she had feared. She had planned twenty ways of meeting it; she

had wept bitterly when some of her replies could only tell her grandfather he had counted too much on her; and Barbara never thought of lying. The professor waited.

"How about it, lass?"

"He confessed to being very tired, and I agreed with him. He's been looking very badly, I think," she replied. She had planned no such answer; but it seemed to serve its turn. There was a ring to it, though.

"Is that all?"

"I'm pretty sure he's serious in thinking he's made a mistake," she went on. Risk something! You must battle for him! cried her heart. "And — and I think so too, grandfather."

It seemed as though even Hannah were reading the signals in her cheeks.

"You are a nonsensical baby, and don't know what you're talking about." The professor laughed again as of old, but sobered the next moment. "The boy was fairly insolent, though." He shook his head. Barbara stopped breathing. "Tell him — what I bade you, Hannah."

"Yassir."

You can see him again. Let him go. Not a word, Barbara! You've done well enough for now, whispered the heart.

"Hannah!" called the professor. "It's not

in me to refuse his explanation, Babbie, even if— He may need some advice, you know. Ask Mr. Paul into the study, Hannah. I'll see him," said the professor, rising and brushing the crumbs from his lap, "directly."

He looked across the table and smiled into the girl's troubled eyes. "Don't worry, dear."

"I—I can't help worrying."

"It may be only some whim he took. I fancy it was, as I say, only a bit of overstrain. Reaction, you know."

"A whim, grandfather? Oh!"

He reassured her. "I don't believe he meant it at all. We'll bring him back, dear. We'll bring him back."

It could not have been long that she waited. Hannah came back from her errand directly, and began to collect and carry out the breakfast things. While she worked, there was talk about the strawberries for lunch and the mayonnaise Barbara was to make for the asparagus. Then the silver went out, and there followed more talk about having Hardy give a new rubbing to the table-top. The paper was refolded, the letters picked up. The whole was what happened every morning; but Barbara had time to pass in review a year of her life. It was in July that she had met him in Paris. She was near scolding

Hannah for so delaying over her work, but the little clock on the mantel struck only one quarter all the time she was in the room.

"Mr. Paul had somethin' impo'tant on his mind, I guess," Hannah remarked at length.

"Did he? Tell Annie I 'd like to see her when she 's through her breakfast."

"Yas, Miss Babbie; yas, 'm." Hannah had trouble in escaping with dignity. Left alone, Barbara waited in a kind of agony. She stole out into the hall, but scurried back at once. If she only dared go in where they were! She called dumbly, stretching out her arms. He must not go back! He must come with her; she would show him where life was. Could he hear her through the hall, through the closed door? Then she remembered something, and standing in the doorway, her eyes on fire, her fingers knitted tight, Barbara sang what the night before she had caroled out to the stars and the June air.

"La mère Mignonette
Planta ses artichauts
Au pied de sa roulette
Dans l'eau."

It was very silly in her.

"But it may help a little," cried Barbara.

“ Nous serons jamais sage,
 Jamais, jamais, jamais ;
Nous serons jamais sage,
 Jamais ! ”

“ Barbara ! ” It was her grandfather who flung open the study door. She had barely time to slip back into the dining-room and fall to examining the begonias in the window-garden. “ Barbara ! ”

She saw the two men as if in a mist. She was conscious mainly of smiles everywhere, a vague sense of hilarity pervading every corner of the big room. She let Paul take her hand; she felt her grandfather’s kiss on her cheek. She may have laughed herself a little; she tried to, certainly.

After ever so long she awoke to find herself in a corner of the big sofa. And in the same moment she perceived that she must have come straight across from the door.

“ Tell her ! ” commanded the Master.

She had guessed already. There was no need of explanation, for the professor’s accent when he called her had sounded his victory. But she had to listen while Paul explained and explained.

“ I acted very silly last night, Babbie,” he said.
“ You were very good to bear with me.”

“ I ? ”

"Yes, indeed. You never told me what you must have thought."

"I did n't, Paul. I—I could n't very well."

"And you 'd been such a trump about helping me, and all!" He laughed rather ruefully. "I don't see how I could be so blind."

He stopped short, as if he thought she was about to speak.

"Blind!" whispered Barbara. She forgot where she was for a moment. The men wondered a bit at the way she spoke. It was very gentle, with a hint of sorrow, for all that her words seemed merely lightly reproachful. "You are — were a little blind, Paul."

"Not again, Babbie. I 'll understand another time." And he added, seeing her little smile, "I won't make another such mistake, I promise you."

She made no answer at all. And when the men began the talk anew she withdrew quietly to the window, where she stood looking out into the quiet street with the Green beyond.

To the Master Paul had not related what had transpired under the great archway. It was not necessary, he had decided. It was enough to come back and say that he was sorry he had acted so hastily; that he hoped Professor Hare would excuse what had sprung from a day of

vexing work. To show that his enthusiasm had not really flagged was all the Master would require, and of this Paul assured him over and over. What is more, Paul was perfectly sincere in speaking as he did. The new emotion laid hold of him as deeply as any of the others. He could not feel things only a little, but at the same time the newest turn of his desire was with him that which rode him hardest. That is how he had doubted in undergraduate days, when boys are dreaming, whether he had best become a priest or an architect or a silk manufacturer. Yesterday a girl he had believed in advised him to quit the life which to-day a great man had urged him once more to follow; his heart had opened to both of them, and his conviction was what theirs had been. He would have been a fool if he had not possessed a power to achieve things.

This time, however, he was sure. This time there was no doubt, for, everything else aside, he had picked up the glove Bowers had thrown down.

The professor listened to his talk approvingly.

"Ah!" he cried, "I knew! I knew! You cannot stop, boy. I have you now. You are mine to make. Mine?" He wheeled about to look for the girl. "Where's my little ally, my helper?"

She came to him, dead white. He caught her in the fold of his arm and looked up in her face. "We will win him back, I said. Eh, child? He is ours—ours and the world's. Have we not made him, this scholar of ours?"

She stood mute, examining the great ring the old man wore. Then she raised her head.

"You're really going on with it, Paul?"

"Really, Babbie."

She released herself from the old man's arm, crossed to where Paul was sitting, and extended her hand. He took it, and looked a question.

"Good-by," said Barbara, steadily.

The professor laughed aloud. He stayed her as she was making to leave.

"He's on a long journey, lass. We've given him a start, though. And we wish the boy well, eh?"

"Yes, yes," she answered faintly. "I—I—"

"Thank you very much, Babbie."

"Good-by," she repeated.

XI

COMMENCEMENT

IN the old days, when Dale was nothing more or less than one of the New England colleges, Commencement was a ceremony interesting mostly to the parents and friends of the youths who delivered the speeches. Do you remember how tired your back got? How you slipped out, the moment you received your parchment with its blue ribbon, to walk about on the Green with the girls? It took so very long to get through. Only the alumni endured to the end, unwilling to miss a moment of the dear old life they come back so loyally each year to partake of. They found Commencement just as much fun as the boat-race or the ball-game—different, of course, but enjoyed because it was a college function, because it awoke a whole flock of memories, a little sad, a little pensive, recalling starts in life, promises, fulfilments.

The new Commencement they hardly would

recognize. If they go to this ceremony, it is more as to a bit of pageantry one views from the curb or a shop window, or outside the rood-screen.

The parts of Oldport that are unconnected with the academic end of the town find the new ceremonies vastly more entertaining than the old, however.

As early as half-past eight in the morning events begin to transpire. Squads of burly police, in full dress, swing across the Green from headquarters to their stations at the various gateways of the Campus and the doors of the chapel. A little later the experienced among the crowd drift over toward the side entrance of the Oldport Hotel, where at any time up to ten o'clock are to be seen the great men—prelates, ambassadors, academicians—who emerge to walk over to their appointed meeting-place on the Campus. There are the splendors of academic dress to comment on, derisively or admiringly as the mood strikes one. Oldport never saw these things until a few years ago. It finds vastly interesting and highly perplexing the significance of the oddly cut black gowns of rustling silk, faced and chevroned with velvet, the spreading hoods of scarlet or blue or purple with their linings of more easily understood college colors—

crimson, blue, and white, a dozen other combinations. There is ermine and gold lace, and lamb's wool; velvet caps of medieval cut. All over the Campus are groups of varied distinction, from the dozen who are to receive the highest degrees—these inconspicuous in plain black silk, were it not for a kind of air such great folk have—down through the guests from other colleges, and the various Dale faculties of law, letters, science, medicine, and theology, who stretch out in a hundred yards of black and scarlet and yellow and blue, splendid against the June grass and the gray of the buildings, till at last, at the further end of the great rectangle, the musicians are clustered about the bass drum. Marshals hurry about with lists of names to check off, their gowns bellying behind them; wives and daughters of the college presidents whose seats in the chapel are being reserved—the lesser women form a line at the entrances like boys at the theater—move about, parasols and foulards airy and bright against the blocks of heavy color the men display; here and there glow the blue and gold and brass trappings of the army or navy. The people stare past the policemen at the gateways and find the assemblage very beautiful. The students, in gray flannel with Panama hats, lounge about at their ease, contradicting

each other as to the identity of dignitaries, mocking the seniors waiting docile in their place, strangely disguised by their bachelor gowns.

Ten o'clock clangs out. The chief marshal dismisses his aides to their sections, shrugs his gown more comfortably into place, and nods to the drum-major. The slings creak as the heavy drum is settled; those who are responsible for the bass in any tune the band plays infold themselves in the coils of their great tubas.

“Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,”

urge the musicians, and the long lines of doctors, masters, and bachelors move forward as at the touch of a spur.

Bowers hung from his window watching the gay procession as it filed back through the great archway to the old Campus from its short parade down across the Green. Some obscure tangle of feelings had kept him from going to chapel. It would have been embarrassing to have the women stare, for he knew how his mates would cheer him when the president read out his name. The students always applaud those who win the biggest honors. Furthermore, it would be very sweet to sit quietly waiting for Cameron or Hughes or Lee to come tearing up the stairs and

burst in on him with congratulations. Should he receive at his ease, lounging on his window-seat, or at his desk? The latter seemed the better posture, the longer he thought about the matter.

They had chosen a queer thing for the opening of the ceremonies, he thought, as he strained his ears toward the chapel. The *Vorspiel* to "Lohengrin" would set a Commencement audience in a fine state.

"Cry-music is n't the thing!" Bowers grumbled. Even at his distance the shrilling of the strings tugged at his nerves as always when he listened to the mystery of the great prelude's intangible melody. "Symbolism? Poppycock!" He made up a mocking application of the story told by the overture of the Swan-Knight to the tarrying among the common things he and his mates were making. The jest was vulgar and dull enough, but Bowers rolled about with laughter as he elaborated it. His nerves were screwed taut. To talk roughly, to play the loafer, were with him infallible signs of tension. He had cursed his runaway impulses twenty times since they had made him blackguard Paul so outrageously.

"I 'm not quite a gentleman, I suppose," he remarked to the picture across the room. A

sudden reaction surged over him. He felt a little ashamed of the mood which had just passed. He readjusted his tie. He looked around the filthy den he lived in with a kind of sick anger on him. There were tobacco and ashes all about; the tumbled sheets on his bed in the alcove were gray where they were not stained; the soapy water stood in the nicked wash-bowl. But on his desk were piles of close-written paper, and a great note-filing cabinet—bought at ruinous expense—held not a slip of facts or dates or references he did not know by heart. The sight of this sent him skyward again. “But I’ve the makings of a cursed good scholar about me, madam. I’m only a savage, but I’m an intelligent savage. Bring forth your royal diadem,” he went on madly, turning from Mona Lisa to the distant chapel, “and crown me. Crown me the best student Dale can show to-day. Give it to me, you brutes! Three years in Germany is my due, Mr. President. Ah!”

He fell back, hugging himself.

For a half-hour there had come from the chapel bursts of hand-clapping, now and then a murmur of many voices. The president was reading out the awards of honors in scholarship.

Paul had come on the Campus just at the

wrong time. He had meant to slip over to the library to return a couple of books, when the exercises were just beginning; but, delaying a little, he found that there was like to happen what he most dreaded. To hear the cheering for another man—for Bowers, ugh!—would be dreary enough; to meet congratulation would be embarrassing too. He worried sadly through the effusive greetings of a pair of his classmates up from New York for the Commencement season, trying his best to escape them.

"Wha' 's that?" inquired one of the twain. He had started the day splendidly, he said. "Wha' 's the cheerin', Paul?"

"Prexy makin' 's speech?" asked the other.

"I guess so. Let go, Jack."

"Oh, nonsense! Stay 'while, Paul. I have n't seen you 'n a year—a long, sad year."

The cheering, which had been somewhat desultory at first, settled down now into the splendid beat of the old college slogan. The clapping sounded like hail on leaves.

"Let go, Jack. I—"

"Gardiner! That 's who they 're yellin' for. Gardiner! What you been doin', boy?"

"Come away; come up to my room."

But he was too late. Some one of the little crowd who tumbled out of chapel saw him be-

fore he could get away, and with a yell of delight they all pounced upon him.

"Good work, old man!"

"You're all *right*, Paul!"

They were graduate students mostly—Japanese two of them; all forgetting themselves to caper wildly about the man who had won them to him. And then the news spread. Some of the alumni, seeing the excitement and asking its cause, begged pardon, but wished very much to congratulate him. A group of twenty men were soon crowding about Paul to shake his hand, as he stood backed up against old West College.

He tried to get away a dozen times. It made him feel like a fool to have the passers-by stare, then smile their blessings at him. And worse than all, looking overhead for a second, he had seen the face which peered down at him from a window on the second story. To triumph in the very presence of his beaten rival was too much. Bowers had worn a look almost terrible.

"Got to go," Paul protested, showing his impatience a bit. "Thank you ever so much, but — really, Jack, I mean it. *Please!*"

He broke from them into the staircase-hall of the old building. In the half-darkness he stood still, throbbing with a dozen emotions. His

throat was dry, his eyes ached, he felt a little faint and sick.

The door opened and out of the light stepped a slight figure.

“Going up, Gardiner?”

Paul shaded his eyes. “Oh, it’s you, Cameron. Yes, I think I am.”

“Better let me go with you, I guess.”

“Think so?”

“Sure. Can’t tell, you know. You run a risk, Gardiner.”

“He must n’t think I meant to — to get congratulated right under his window,—not for a minute.”

“I see. All right. Go ahead.”

Bowers met them just as he had planned. He was at his desk, coat off, eye-shade on. One would not guess, to look at that mask, that the disappointed rage Paul had seen there had ever ruffled it. His eyes narrowed to tiny slits, and he kept scraping his grisly jaw with his broad thumb.

“You heard the — the row down there, just now?” Paul asked.

The other blanked his face still more.

“I heard a row. What was it?”

He had Paul foul at once. It would not be easy to explain all the details of that tumult.

One might appear easily a beast telling of a riot raised over one's own good fortune.

"Why—"

"Sit down. Do. I'm very neglectful."

"No, I can't stay. I just wanted to tell you the best man did n't get the Washington fellowship, Bowers."

No answer. The man went white to the lips. Cameron came closer; another step would bring him between the others. He knew what had lain in a corner of the table drawer ever since the night Paul had won the applause of the Language Club. Outside rose light laughter and women's talk; the noon sun cast flecks of gold on the turf through the elm-branches. Mona Lisa made no sign, for she had seen all things.

"Did they give it to you?"

"Yes."

Bowers stood up. "I hope," he said, in a voice curiously unlike his usual harsh, steady grate,— "I hope that you may enjoy your winnings."

"Thank you, Bowers."

The man's lips drew back in a fierce snarl.

"Don't thank me!" he burst out. "What I said was a lie. You're a robber, Gardiner,—damn you!"

Paul started as from a blow in the face.

"Take that back! You challenged me. It was a fair fight, and you know it."

They watched each other in a deathly quiet, breathing deep. Cameron raised his hand to clutch Bowers's wrist, should he draw the revolver.

"This, too!" murmured Bowers, through his dry lips. Then he leaned across the table and extended a shaking hand. "For God's sake, give it back to me, Gardiner!"

"What d' ye mean?"

"The fellowship! I want it. It's mine, Paul."

The reserve, the courage to endure had broken at last. The man's strength flowed from him like water. The arrogant, powerful, savage fighter was down, and the shame of it never troubled him. He asked quarter like a fallen trooper. In a kind of frenzy he caught Paul by the shoulders, then by the hands, babbling over and over his poor tale of helplessness, his prayer for aid from the man that had beaten him. Then, in an agony, he flung himself face downward on the rickety window-seat.

"Twice he won from me!" they heard him groan. "The two dreams of my life."

Cameron looked at Paul inquiringly.

"Twice? How's that?"

"Have n't an idea," the other returned, honestly enough. But Cameron, moving by merest chance to the side of the room opposite the windows, discovered tacked to the door-frame a picture of Barbara Hare. Paul, looking after him, met the question in Cameron's eyes and colored scarlet.

"He must n't think — any such thing. Neither must you, Cameron."

"I wish I could, then," the quiet man returned. "I wish we could believe the gossip that we hear." Then he crossed to Bowers. "You poor devil!" he whispered.

The fear and the blind sorrow in the big fellow's face shocked them as he sat up.

"There — there 's no need of saying anything about this?" said Cameron.

Paul shook his head. "Certainly not. It 's too awful." He held out his hand to the vanquished. "I say, Bowers. I—"

"My heavens, how I slaved and starved for it! How I longed for just a look from her!"

The others thought shame to listen, but they could not get away. The man's moods chased one another over him like clouds across a valley. They saw a man's soul stripped naked; heard the songs and lamentations his heart had sung or groaned for a year. It was Samson, blinded at

last, feeling the weight of the yoke as he toiled at the mill.

Paul's eyes were misty when at last he could speak. To think how lightly he had thought of what was bread and meat to this real student! And then, in a sudden gust of anger, partly with himself, partly with a world that went wrong, he remembered Barbara's light scorn at a victory won over a man like this, who cried out for mercy after a fair fight.

"You — you ought to have had it," he stammered. "I'd no idea it meant so much to you."

"It 's yours," Bowers answered. "You were too much for me."

"You 'd do best by it," cried Paul, warming as he went on. "You 're the real scholar, Bowers."

"But you 're the man that wins," came the reply, as the head went down again among the cushions. "The man that wins."

Cameron opened the door into the hallway.

"Coming, Gardiner?"

"I don't want to leave him this way."

The figure on the window-seat came erect. A clearer light was in his eyes. The faintest touch of his old assurance came back, but made into dignity.

"Forget what I said just now, will you?"

"Surely. It was hard to take, Bowers."

"And will you believe one thing of this crazy, noisy fool?"

Cameron shut the door.

"The crazy fool's not through yet."

"How do you mean?"

"He's going to be Washington Fellow next year."

Down-stairs Cameron and Paul drew long sighs, and the little man, thinking of his friend, could hardly keep from asking a question that burned on his tongue.

"I suppose you'll be sailing before long," he hinted craftily. "Paris?"

"How do I know?" asked Paul, roughly. "Beg your pardon, Cameron. That poor devil of a Bowers!"

"He takes a licking pretty hard."

"But don't you see," cried Paul, "that he deserved the cursed fellowship? I wish I could get some advice just this minute."

"Denny Hare?"

"Can't go there. They'll have a house full to-day. I'll have to wait and think."

There was a great company at luncheon, as Paul had said. It happened that the university was conferring a degree on Mr. Austin that year, so he established headquarters at the Hare house;

and in his train followed his wife and Peggy, and in the train of Peggy followed Dick. Of course everybody laughed a great deal at the youngsters, because they were so handsome and so prettily dignified as well as engaged to be married—entirely charming, to be sure. And Mrs. Tew was there, who had not missed Commencement in forty-five years, her father having been president, her brother a very famous professor.

Barbara waited for them at the house. She had not cared to go up to the chapel; she had a headache. Mrs. Tew kissed her after listening to her excuses; then asked one or two questions.

"He will win it, without a doubt. Oh, yes, Aunt Tew!"

"Humph! A pretty business. He's very rich?"

"I believe so."

"Humph! A rich scholar's a queer thing. He's a young fool. I have no patience with him. And his father and grandfather such splendid men! So *very* different, my dear."

"Different?" Barbara's eyes caught fire. "How do you mean—different?"

The old lady might have smiled, for her ruse worked to perfection. She confirmed what she had long suspected. But her face softened to an expression almost motherly at once. She was

very fond of her grandniece. She kissed her again, and Barbara found her worldly old aunt dearer than she had ever guessed possible.

But Barbara could not but laugh a little later, when Commencement was over, and the visitors began to stream away.

To fetch home from chapel Mrs. Tew had only to walk straight down the street some hundred yards; but when Barbara finally saw her aunt, the old lady was approaching along one of the paths of the Green, and this meant that she had come a roundabout way, which, under other circumstances, would have been impossible for her to undertake. But now! On her right paced a major-general, whom the students cheered madly and the reporters photographed; blue and gold, tanned, splendidly straight. It was a presence equaled that day only by his who escorted Mrs. Tew on the left. This was a bishop in the scarlet of Oxford, with a great cross of amethysts winking on his breast. Naturally Mrs. Tew walked home across the Green.

"Of course you will stay for luncheon," Barbara told the two dignitaries after Mrs. Tew had presented her.

"I'm afraid — "

"An engagement?"

"Half a one. But I'm very unwilling not to stay, my dear."

Barbara looked to the soldier. "Don't say *you* are n't to accept, General."

"I should be only too glad, if I may."

The Bishop laughed. "We go together, Miss Hare. If the General sits at your right, I must sit at the left."

Mrs. Tew looked away. "Those old men are very silly over a bit of a school-girl," she said inwardly.

"You will sit beside my aunt," Barbara said. "In the places of honor."

"Delighted," replied the General.

"If I thought she was laughing at me, I would disinherit her," continued Mrs. Tew.

The Bishop had no more than laid off his silk and the General his sword when some other guests came up the walk. These were Mr. Austin and his wife, who walked behind her husband so as to enjoy more fully the effect of the new gown and hood, and brought a wicked word to his lips by fondly adjusting the hang of the rustling garments on the public street. And in the wake of the older folks straggled Peggy and Dick.

"Where is Dr. Hare?" asked the Bishop.

"He ought to be here at once," Mrs. Tew re-

plied, speaking as from long experience. "But he is likely to be delayed a little after Commencement, so many desiring a word with him."

"Such a distinguished man!"

"Yes, indeed. *We are* proud of him."

"I shall enjoy meeting him again so much. It's thirty years since we've had a word together."

"So long?" Mrs. Tew sighed. "The years slip by so quickly, Bishop Kent."

"So quickly one hardly perceives they are gone, Mrs. Tew, sometimes."

Mrs. Tew really blushed, and the Bishop chuckled. He wished he could catch the General's eye, so as to share his amusement. The two had laughed and laughed as they crossed the Green with Mrs. Tew. But the General was hard at it with Barbara and Peggie, Dick hovering near for a while, then flouncing out to the piazza when he found he could not compete just then with a fine old gentleman in uniform. So the half-hour passed till Dr. Hare came, and then almost immediately they went out to luncheon.

And here Dick was made angry again, for he was young and single and male—so had to struggle alone after the little procession his elders and betters made up. Mrs. Tew wished her brother would make his dinners and luncheons a

trifle more formal in the details, but was well content on the whole. She could half close her eyes and fancy herself in any of half a dozen great houses as she leaned on the Bishop's arm and followed the glittering shoulder-knots of the General along the hall. And when she saw the table, Mrs. Tew decided that things were really admirably arranged.

"Tasteful, very," she said to her escort. "Not — well, splurgy."

"Your little grandniece seems a fine house-keeper," replied the Bishop. "This is her doing, of course. And with no warning at all."

"That girl's head will be turned beyond patience," the old lady observed silently. "But I must confess she does things."

The few swift directions and the few touches Barbara had given with her own fingers resulted charmingly. The table was spread on the piazza, in the shade where the breeze stirred the ends of the cloth; there were delicate roses; there was a show of silver from the deepest places of the safe—the plates which even Hannah was not allowed to touch. Before the guests stretched the garden, all gay under the sun.

The General set down his long-stemmed hock-glass with a sigh. "Civilization's a grand, good thing, Miss Hare."

"You chose the other way of life four years ago," she replied. "May I tell you how we followed your exploits out yonder? That was greater than life at home, I think. A man can breathe deeper, I should think, in doing the things a soldier does. It's so free, somehow, and—and so big, General."

"Soldiering's usually destruction, Miss Hare."

"Not your soldiering," she cried. "You're just clearing the way for the good to follow."

"Men's lives?"

"The tangles and the obstructions in the woods have to be cut away if there's ever going to be a trail and a clearing. That's not destruction."

The General laughed. "I wish everybody here at home thought so. It'd make things a great deal easier."

"To do great deeds—deeds worth while!" exclaimed Barbara, looking out into the sunny garden. "So many men waste time and strength, I think."

"You don't see that here in Oldport, I guess. Dale does n't mean wrong effort, Miss Hare. I call your grandfather to witness."

"He is only one," she said slowly.

"I don't understand," replied the General.

A deal of laughter from the other end of the

table swept away whatever might have remained of the conversation Barbara and the old soldier were holding. It brought her sad eyes back from the journey about the garden, where the sun was, and the bright flowers; it made her smile a little, who had fallen so grave.

"Young folks' day!" Dr. Hare cried in the midst of the mirth. Dick and Peggie tried to look up without smiling so consciously. It had been a mistake to try holding hands under the edge of the table-cloth. "Don't blush, youngsters. We envy you, every one of us."

Mrs. Tew looked at Barbara covertly. The girl's cheeks were scarlet, the voice seemed not quite her own when she laughed with the rest—more shrilly than usual.

"My brother is very cruel or very blind," thought Mrs. Tew. "I can't believe he understands."

"A lover and his lass!" the Master went on. "You must understand how things are with them, gentlemen," he cried to the Bishop and the General. "We old folks love them very dearly. Youth, youth, young life! It's a very precious possession, Dick and Peggie. Enjoy it to the full, children." He raised his glass and smiled around the board. "A toast to all young lovers and their happiness!" cried the Master, jubilantly.

"My dear!" Mrs. Tew exclaimed, leaning forward to see past the General; "I hope—"

Barbara smiled back, but she upset her glass of wine, as she set it back on the table. "I'm very clumsy," she said, apologizing. "Did it spill on you at all, sir?"

"No, no," said the General. "And you drank your toast to the young people before a drop was wasted."

"I'm glad for that," she said.

If she saw the sympathy in her aunt's eyes, she made no sign. For a moment she had wavered, but the table had not stopped its light laughter, the quick response in all the honest hearts to the Master's call had not died away, before Mrs. Tew, watching her grandniece, wondered whether she had not read into the girl's life a hope and a disappointment which really never were there.

"I think I must try again," said the old lady, inwardly.

The luncheon dragged along to its close. Mrs. Tew collected the ladies with a glance and pushed back her chair. The men rose and laid their napkins on the table.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Professor Hare. "It's ever so nice out here. Don't let 's go into the house and break up our party. Have you women

any secrets? Peggy and Dick may go, but the others—”

“ You’re tyrannous, my dear,” Mrs. Tew said. She was quite ruffled.

“ I am. I confess it. But please obey.”

It was easy to persuade them. The piazza was cool and wide, they made up a good company, the men had talked well for many years, and knew all things. Peggy and Dick made off, but the rest took their seats again, and the men lit their cigars.

The conversation came back to Commencement. It was the General’s first visit to Dale, and he had questions to ask.

“ The way the boys applauded their favorite prize-winners struck me as ever so pleasant,” he remarked. “ They seemed to mean it.”

“ They certainly did when the president read out the award of the Washington fellowship,” replied Mr. Austin. “ That’s the biggest prize, eh, Hare?”

The Master nodded.

“ Who’s the young man that won it?” asked the Bishop. “ Did you know him?”

“ I think I must tell you about Gardiner,” the Master answered, after a little. “ May I?”

The Bishop settled himself to listen, the General also, making themselves as easy as might be

in their straight-backed chairs. The others sat still, looking at the table or off into the garden, for the story was not new to them. Mrs. Tew rose.

"I cannot wait, I 'm afraid, brother. I 've something to talk to Barbara about. Will you excuse me for a minute or two?"

The Master smiled. "I don't believe you can lure Babbie away. And my story so pointless without her!"

"Oh, no, grandfather!"

She was strangely agitated, and everybody laughed at her deep blush as she glanced, half in reproach, half in appeal, toward the professor. They teased her finely, clamorous for the story about the young prize-winner, in whose doings she was somehow concerned. Mrs. Tew smiled a little when the Bishop made his joke, then took a place again at the table. But she drew a chair up to Barbara's this time, and capturing the girl's hand when nobody was looking, held it tight all the time the Master was telling his tale.

He was in such high spirits!

"This is my day, too!" he cried, by way of preface. "Be happy with me, just as you were with the two children a moment ago!"

"Your very good health, sir," said the General.

"Thank you. Well!" He drew a deep

breath, and started afresh on his discourse. He spoke more easily as he went on. At the beginning he seemed not to know how to handle his subject, its recital moved him so. He told them of his wish for that successor who should be worthy to carry on his work; of the dozens of young men he had examined and passed over. Then chance had brought about the month in Paris; then good fortune had granted him the Winter of work with this last of his 'prentices. And now he had found his man. Now he had found the young scholar he could be proud of, whom he could trust to carry out the mission himself could not fulfil.

"Fine!" exclaimed the General. "And the best of it is that you 've taught this youngster all he knows. That 's what 's most satisfactory, I should think,—to realize that you 've had the forming of him."

The others murmured their agreement. The General had expressed the thought exactly, said Mr. Austin.

"No, no," replied the Master, gently. "Not I alone. It would have been nothing so."

A little hush came down on the guests as they saw the new light which dawned across the old man's face. There had been elation there just now, the gaiety of a boy who has won a race.

But now the big eyes softened, and the smile turned very gentle. He was looking straight at Barbara.

"Not I alone," the Master repeated.

They were all looking at her now, dimly understanding, not quite sure what to say.

"If I am ever so happy over the way this affair has turned out, I owe it to my granddaughter."

He left them uncertain still.

"Oh, no, grandfather!"

The hand Mrs. Tew held turned icy.

"Always ready to help him when he was discouraged, nay, starting him in the scholar's way when he was uncertain, working with me, advising, scolding, praising — did you not, dearest?"

"I — I —"

"A true child of our work and life! Hers is the praise, friends."

The General looked around the board, and his kindling laugh brightened the little shade which the moment's feeling brought.

"One more toast, then!" he called. "A dutiful grandchild, bless her bright eyes! My compliments, Miss Barbara!"

"To all scholars!" cried Barbara, springing to her feet. "May they all — every one, every one — be as great and good as my grandfather!"

How could she know that the night was going to find her scholar-hero a prey to a thousand doubts and fears? That far down the road that was to lead him to the world's heights he stood still, leaning on his laureled spear?

XII

BARBARA COMES INTO HER KINGDOM

ALL the afternoon Paul tramped the country over, looking for his answer. But the scent of the clover and the free sailing of the clouds mocked him with their calls to his heart, and he had forever dinning in his ears the cry of despair he had heard first that morning. He returned as wise as when he set out, and the evening had mostly gone by without a word of help, though all around him in the crammed bookcases were his friends of the sad hours.

Toward ten o'clock somebody knocked on his door.

"Come in!" Paul cried. He would have welcomed a book-agent, so was really pleased when there came into the light Devine, the painter. And Paul was extremely flattered, for Devine rarely took the trouble to be gracious.

"I suppose you 'll go to Paris," the artist began, when his congratulations were delivered. "Do you know her? The real Paris?"

"A little. I was rescued from the tourist quarter."

"Somebody did you a good turn, then. I tell you, Paris is the making of you boys." The great man began his familiar discourse, while Paul lay back on the cushions, smoking furiously. The past Summer jumped up to meet him. The days took on the golden mellowness again. All the walks and talks with her, the solemnity in her hushed, earnest voice when she told him what life seemed to mean, its gaiety when they planned this joke or that kindness! Suppose she had not given him his start that time together.

"I owe a great deal to the — people who showed me the way to go," said Paul, when Devine paused for breath.

"You owe a candle —"

"To my patron saint?"

"If you possess one."

Her words of encouragement were the last he heard as he rolled away from the big house. He must do good work, she had cried after him.

"I had to find Paris for myself," Devine resumed. "My family and friends quite deserted me, confound 'em. Now I desert *them*. A member of my family can't buy one of my pictures for love or money. Ha! If *your* friends

are different, bless 'em for me when you meet 'em."

He would not see her for three years. But he would have so much to show her. Lying there on the cushions, he shut his eyes, the better to fancy her welcoming smile. Her knight, riding on the quest she set him, must bring back high treasure if he wished to do well.

"It's a long row to hoe," exclaimed Paul, with a half-sigh. "Three years!"

"Nonsense!" retorted Devine. "You won't find it half long enough. I know. If you cast anchor there, you'll die of homesickness when you leave. If you go to Munich or Heidelberg, say, you'll find it absolutely necessary to sneak back the first time you can hoodwink your academic bosses into thinking you need a leave of absence. I know. Get into your work, and you'll forget even the good angels, or who ever it was that first put you to it. *I know.*"

"Forget!" cried Paul.

"Even so. If you don't—"

"Well?" asked the young man, as the other checked himself.

"If you don't forget, your heart's not in your work," the painter declared calmly.

Forget! As though he could, even for a moment, forget the debt he owed her, or hope to repay it.

"That seems a little ungrateful," he replied.

"Possibly. But a man's family and friends, no matter how well they may mean, are fearfully in the way. They give advice, confound 'em. *You* know what you want to do well enough."

"One's patron saint!"

"Pay your candle and call it square." He rose and caught from Paul's desk a paper pamphlet.

"Worthless, I'll bet!" cried Devine. "An English parson trying scholarship!"

"Professor Hare disposed of him in the last 'Review,'" said Paul from his corner.

The painter read a couple of paragraphs, flung down the pamphlet, began again one of his long discourses,—high in the air, circling and darting like an angry hawk, so high that Paul could not hope to follow his motions. The air of the room grew heavy with denunciation, electrical with passionate fancyings. Paul had welcomed this queer, famous man, eager for his talk, with much of the feeling that had sent him so often to the Master's knee; but now, as Devine waxed shrill, there sprang up before Paul's tired eyes a vision of Ashley's greenery and a bonny mare keen for a scamper 'cross-country. He saw a slippery mountain path and a girl who leaned her weight on his arm.

"What do *you* think?" asked the painter, breaking off. "You have n't said a word."

"Metaphysics and — and that sort of thing?" Paul felt himself a year or so back, somehow. He had listened, as he did to lectures when first he became aware of how little he knew, dulled and aching with the strain of attention.

"This sort of thing." The painter, with his lean forefinger, seemed to trace the shape of his discussion in the heavy smoke-wreaths.

"I don't know, I 'm sure."

"You ought to know something, I should think."

"I suppose so. But I have n't head enough."

The painter laughed and laughed. "Head enough? Read and remember. That's all. Be a bit fluent, too. Squabble with a Jew like Meyer. Write a dull book. Wear silk and velvet on gala days—"

"It 's more than that, Mr. Devine."

"Blessed boy!"

"But I wish I could see the end sometime." He turned his back and went to the window. Beyond and around was the life of Oldport, grinding on with never a word for him. Above, two or three stars shone mistily.

"There is no end," replied Devine. "The man — you or I — drives along at top speed,

perhaps; but — there 's always a turn in the road, boy, just ahead. Suppose I could paint like Michelangelo. I would n't stop, would I ? Suppose you knew as much as Immanuel Kant; you 'd know a bit further, eh ? I think — I 'm sure of it. Only be sure you 're in the work to stay."

The room grew quiet for a while. Paul's thoughts were in a whirl. He could not speak just yet.

"So Dr. Hare 's been your master here at Dale. I sold him a picture a couple of years or so ago."

"I 've seen it very often."

"How 's his granddaughter ?"

"Barbara ?"

Devine smote his chair-arm. "I 've a mind to marry her myself, if only to get her away from the old man. My soul ! how she must pine now and then among those books!"

"She loves them."

"Ah ! but she should love something else. Such beauty, such spirit ought n't to waste away among Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and that kind of trash. And she *will* love somebody some day."

He rose and stretched his long arms and legs, crossed the room, and fumbled in the row of books.

"You talk of the end, Gardiner. I can't quote, so I'll read. This is about things in general, boy. Don't think me impertinent, for I have n't any intention of being so. Only—well, old R. B. says things once and forever, you know."

The painter's voice was thin and nasal, but he read well. The great poem seemed to flame out before Paul as he stood, with his back turned, looking out the window. Half-way through, Devine came to a halt.

"I can't go on. I should choke, I'm afraid." He laid his arm affectionately across Paul's shoulder. "You must n't let a tired man's soliloquy disturb you, boy. You'll do well, I fancy. Good night."

But Paul did not look around. He stayed at the window, staring into the dark with its mocking stars, his heart on fire. The poet's message, just learned now,—how often he had coldly studied and analyzed the poem's music!—won another quick answer.

"Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?"

Paul asked the stars.

"And Heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, forever ride."

"But she would think me a sorry coward if I stopped before things were fairly started," said Paul to himself in the morning.

What waking dreams had kept him tossing on his bed till all-hours! In a dozen different ways he planned the new life that might begin for them. There would be books there, of course, and high converse; but mostly hours afield, where God's own creatures had their dwelling. They must breathe deep. They must make friends, not of dead men's thoughts, but of the rain and the sun. He saw her planning great things for the old place, helping him to their furthering, laughing over the mistakes, laughing again when the new market was found or the peach trees brought to fruitage. So Paul the night through.

But in the morning he found that he had built on his own hopes alone. She had told him too often of the work she deemed most worth a man's while. True, a year ago, he had learned that to please her one must simply try his best, whatever the career; but to this were added the months wherein she showed, clinging tight to the old man's arm, what that career should be of all the rest. Would she listen to him if he spoke of any work but the scholar's?

He must journey on. And, after all, there

were moments in the march that thrilled one. Camping the night before in a swamp was bad soldiering, said Paul. He was on his way to the mountains.

A quick hail from the carriage which pulled up beside him just as he was entering the Campus woke Paul from his dreaming.

"Get in!" commanded Dr. Ranger. "I was just going for you. It's Bowers," he added. "Been with him all night."

"What's the matter?"

"Your cursed system's the matter," replied the Doctor, crisply. "Over-work and over-worry. The old story. Bellew over again."

"Great Scott! As bad's that?" Paul shivered, remembering the tragedy which the incoming tide brought to light two years before.

"Likely to be. I want you to make up some quarrel or other you've had. He asks for you all the time. Had a row?"

"No, sir. I won a prize he was trying for."

"And I thought it was something serious!" grunted the Doctor. They had come to the entry door by now. "Wait here till I send down. I've got a fellow named Cameron to play nurse. I'll ask him to let you know."

The Campus was deserted except for two or three carts on which men were loading furniture

from the empty dormitories. Around the old barrack where Bowers lived it was so quiet that where he stood Paul heard every word of the pitiful, babbling story that the man up-stairs reeled off so breathlessly.

"I'll beat him yet!" yelled the voice, leaping an octave. "I must win! I must live! I must win! I—"

"Help me, Cameron!" The Doctor's tone was almost savage. "I want his arm bare."

"Take away your drugs. I won't—"

"Steady! Half a half-second."

Paul walked away. He could not listen, yet it had been no fault of his. Bowers ought not to have challenged him.

"Dey's some lady endeavorin' for to 'tract yo' attention, Mr. Gardiner," said one of the colored college servants.

He looked around languidly. Some woman wishing to buy second-hand rugs or a bureau, probably.

"Paul!" called a voice that made him jump, and Barbara leaned down from the light surrey. "How is Mr. Bowers? I was doing errands, and grandfather wanted to find out. I was going to send Gorman up. But—"

"Listen!" The sick man was beginning again. She paled a little at what she heard.

"I 'm waiting to be called up-stairs," said Paul.

"The poor creature!" she sighed. "Can you — can they do anything?"

"He goes off his head so easily," the other tried to say with an air of calmness. "This is just an extreme case."

"Paul," she said suddenly, "I just can't congratulate you this morning. I ought to, though. But *he* came to the house yesterday. Oh!" She hid her eyes.

"I hate myself!" cried Paul, passionately. "That 's my doing — up yonder."

"You must n't think that," she said reprovingly, but not with much energy.

"Ah, but it is my fault! Why did n't I have the sense and the honesty to give up long ago? What is there in it for me?"

"Listen!" she said in turn.

"Shall I drive along a bit, Miss Barbara," asked Gorman.

"No, no," she replied on some vague impulse. She seemed fascinated by what she heard. "It 's very pitiful, Paul."

Who can say what sent the same thought to them that next instant? Why was it that, all of a sudden, Paul faced her with a great resolution on his lips, to find Barbara's applause ready for

him in the beautiful eyes. Yet they said no word. It was only that, like the lightning, some thought passed between them which set them smiling soberly and happily when Dr. Ranger looked out the window.

"Hurry!" Barbara commanded, her eyes alight; and Paul, thinking to read in them a promise or a hope, went straight to the entry door. He had half resolved it before.

They had made a space in the littered room for the bed, which had been dragged out from the alcove, so that the sick man faced the door. He sat up as Paul came in, staring with dreadful, scared eyes.

"Clear out!" he shrieked. "I'll fix you!"

"Nonsense!" said Paul, steadily, looking to the Doctor for instructions. "I guess there's no hard feeling between us, really."

"He beat me! He stole from me!"

Paul forced out a laugh, and perched on the edge of the bed.

"That does n't keep me from paying back, you know."

Bowers grabbed him by the wrist, and for a long time studied his face.

"You said—"

Paul averted his eyes, summoning his courage.

"I shall resign the Fellowship this after-

noon, Bowers, and you're next in line,—ahead of me by rights." He never faltered. "My—I've changed my plans since—"

"That 'll do," said the Doctor, coming up. "You have saved a man's wits, perhaps, Gardiner," he added in a whisper.

He was for pushing Paul away, when Bowers murmured some words only half articulate. The man had dropped back on his pillow now, and lay very quiet. Paul bent his head as Bowers repeated his question.

"It was she that sent me here," said Paul. "She wished me to—to let the best man have a chance."

"She thought of me, then?"

"Surely."

"Some day," he whispered, "I 'll be able to thank you both. Tell her, please. Tell her how I want to help her to her highest happiness, as she has done for me."

"She 's just down-stairs in her carriage," said Cameron from the window.

Bowers's eyes shone. "Could she come?"

The Doctor left the room, Paul sitting always at the bedside. There was a moment's suspense, then suddenly the dingy room was irradiated.

"It 's all arranged now," said Barbara, going straight to the tumbled bed, her delicate dress

sweeping the stained and dusty floor. "It's you that are going to bring credit to Dale from abroad." She looked — a second's glance — at Paul. "I cannot tell you how glad I am, Mr. Bowers."

"Why?" he asked.

"For a dozen reasons," was all Barbara could find for answer.

"You have tried to pay me back," he said, very faintly. "You knew what was denied me, but you tried to comfort me." Then his head dropped again with a sigh.

"We all hope the very best. And — and we'll expect something very great from you, Mr. Bowers. It's what my grandfather always said."

"The world's best!" murmured Bowers. "Mine now, and through her!"

"Go now," said the Doctor. "Bless you both, youngsters!"

They descended the stairs very quietly, as though coming from a great presence; and it was without a word that Barbara mounted again into the surrey.

"Babbie!" cried Paul then, leaning up after her. There was a thrill in his voice. "Babbie, I'm free!"

"It seems so," she laughed back.

"And it was you that did it. Do you understand it all—all that it means?"

Gorman hinted to the horses as his young mistress gave him a quick direction.

"Babbie!"

"Good-by," she called over her shoulder.

"When—"

"We're going up to the old place Saturday," she added, just as the surrey rolled away.

The Master was sorely puzzled to know why Barbara clung so close to Mrs. Tew in the interval between the famous luncheon and the time they arrived in Ashley. To his thinking, the old lady had never been more disagreeable and fault-finding; he tolerated her only because it was a custom of ancient date to have Mrs. Tew visit him through Commencement week. Yet here was his dearest-of-all deserting him to spend the long hours in quiet talks with Mrs. Tew, from which she came away like one who sees fair visions, or, again, as having looked on a part of the world's sorrow. In some unknown way there had been drawn a veil between him and his darling; she made the old man ask himself many questions.

The days passed in a kind of tremulous unrest, till on Monday morning the storm broke with the arrival of the mail. When Barbara answered

the summons she found the Master white and old and speechless.

"Read that!" he ordered; and when she had blindly glanced down the big, handsome page: "Well?"

"It's his resignation," she announced, her color high.

"His life-work abandoned!" thundered the old man. "The work we set him at; the work I had arranged for him; the success that was to make him my son!"

Barbara plaited the letter into tiny folds, her head hanging.

"Oh, it's too bad—too bad! The young fool!" continued the Master, between chagrin and anger.

Barbara waited till the air cleared a little. Then:

"It was after he'd seen poor Mr. Bowers. O grandfather, it was dreadful!"

"Of course Bowers was disappointed—"

"He was going mad!" cried Barbara. "He screamed so! What you saw was n't anything."

"Doctor Ranger had no business to let you see him. I'm surprised you even dreamed of going into his room. That comes of your foolish slumming whimsies, I suppose," stormed Professor Hare.

"You'd do it yourself," she retorted, raising her clear voice ever so little.

"I'd go back on my pledge? I'd throw away my career for nothing? You're a child to talk so."

For the first time in all his life with her, the Master saw Barbara's face turn to marble and her eyes to lightning. She faced him, with her head high.

"I think Paul's done a very noble act. I think it splendidly generous. I'm sorry I don't agree with you, grandfather."

She waited a minute. Then, as the old man merely waved her away, turning from her to sink again into his chair, Barbara left him alone. But when she came to where Aunt Tew was waiting, the anger was all blown away, and the tears were ready.

"I was n't honest with him," she sobbed. "I did n't tell him the real truth. I'm just a traitor, auntie."

The old woman cried with her silently; but her grief dried more quickly, and she rose in majesty.

"Where did he go?" asked Mrs. Tew.

"Auntie, you must n't anger him again."

"As often as I choose. It won't be the first time." She bent to kiss the hot forehead. "We'll

bring it right, darling. I—I know how you feel, Babbie dear."

And, perhaps, from the depths of her memory the crusty old lady could bring up a vision of the days before shower and rain had changed to settled cold and cloud.

She found the Master, after a search in the heat, in the rose-garden; and, sitting beside him on one of the marble benches, began to ask some careful questions. He told her, at the end of his outcry, how he had taught Paul to love learning.

"At some expense," interjected Mrs. Tew.

"Possibly."

"You helped him?"

"Certainly. Have I not labored with him nearly a year? But now—ah!"

She said nothing for a while, but sat drawing little patterns on the gravel walk. She knew exactly what to expect.

"I was so content with my year's effort."

"Then I have nothing to say," Mrs. Tew replied, smiling at him.

The explosion followed, just as she guessed it would.

"What's all this hinting and questioning about, anyway?" roared the old lion. "Why do you always bait me when we come together?

Stay away from me, if you don't approve of my way of ordering things. I don't care whether you like it or not. What is Paul Gardiner to you, anyway, Polly? God bless my soul! but I — ”

“ There — there!” purred Mrs. Tew. “ Swear, if you like, Winthrop. I was only wondering if you saw your winter's work from all sides. Of course you do, though. Forgive my meddlesome curiosity. This affair of young Gardiner, though — ”

“ What about it ? ”

“ It is really such a delicate question, you see.”

She stopped short again, waiting for him. She found things were progressing admirably.

“ Delicate ? How, for Heaven's sake ? ”

She hesitated for an instant, uncertain as to which of her batteries could shatter him most thoroughly. She chose to use her lighter guns first.

“ Of course you know what Paul's career would have meant to Ashley,” she remarked casually. “ I need n't remind you, I suppose.”

“ To Ashley ? ” The lion's roar had died away.

“ And of course you know that it was just the one poor Arthur Gardiner did *not* wish him to choose.”

The Master faced her, rigidly erect. "Speak out," he said. "I'm tired of your hinting."

She did not spare him, as always whenever she was lucky enough to beat down her brother's defense. She told him, with a fine air of candor, all that the lawyer had confided to her after the luncheon party. And at the end she begged him to assure her that he really had no idea of winning for Dale the price of the farm Paul would have to sacrifice; that he did not have what she called "an ulterior motive" in urging Paul to the scholar's life.

"How do you dare say such things?" she heard from the midst of the storm. "How do you dare, you—creature!"

"There, there! I never meant to anger you," simpered Mrs. Tew. "Then—then it is n't at all true?"

"I'm ashamed to deny such a charge. I'm ashamed of my sister for having dared lay it at my door."

She let him fume a while longer. Then Mrs. Tew drew a long breath and plunged into her real attack.

"Dear me!" remarked Mrs. Tew. "So you got young Gardiner into this kind of thing because—"

"Because I believe it to be the best work of any," thundered her brother.

"To please yourself, in other words," she continued, looking him up and down. "Really, Winthrop, the other motive would have been better, as things have turned out."

The ancient man who was supposed to help Wilson the gardener appeared at that moment through a gap in the hedge. He never missed the chance to tell his employer what a thorough gentleman he was, and how faithfully he was served by his aged dependent. And many experiments had proved that to find Dr. Hare in the rose-garden resulted in a gift of pleasant words and, maybe, a dollar. So the aged man doffed his shapeless hat in salute.

"What do you want?" asked Dr. Hare.

"It's well your honor's looking the day," observed the ancient man. "And it's the grand lady that's beside you."

"You're an old fool," came the answer. "If you bother me again when I'm busy, I'll have Wilson discharge you. Understand?"

The ancient man, being quite deaf, grinned toothlessly.

"God rest you, sir, and may you never grow old. It's a fine marnin', sorr."

"Leave me! Go away! I've nothing for you. Where's Wilson?" roared the Master, gesticulating freely. Mrs. Tew fanned herself.

The ancient man had made a firm friend, if he had known it.

"That Wilson's a rogue, and the father of rogues, sorr. I could tell ye a tale or two. Him a gardener! Ho, ho, ho!" He stood, peering sharply from his dreadful old eyes. "Well, I'll not stay, sorr. Only here's a wish that ye may ne'er see the bottom o' the glass or the last sup on yer plate, sorr. An' good day to yer la'ship, too."

"Good day, my good man," replied Mrs. Tew, graciously. "Your Master is not quite well this morning."

"And whose fault is it?" asked Dr. Hare of his sister, when the ancient man had limped away.

"Mine," she said. "All my fault. And I'm not done with you, Winthrop."

He jumped up and stood in front of her.

"I forbid you to say another word. My doings are my own. I permit nobody to interfere. Your intrusion is impertinent and meddlesome to a degree."

"You speak *so* fluently, Winthrop," sighed Mrs. Tew. "Your command of language does you credit. But I think I must go on, really, in spite of your prohibition. I have this matter a good deal at heart, you see."

He made a gesture of surrender.

"What does Barbara say when you ask her to applaud and help this dear plan of yours?" asked Mrs. Tew.

"Babbie?"

"Yes. I'd like to know."

Babbie! So loving and loyal, so true to him, so unselfish, so firm a believer in the scholar's creed! He told her all in a rush of splendid eloquence that left him spent and tired. Mrs. Tew wiped her eyes; her face was very old and sad when she looked up at him.

"Poor child!" she sobbed. "Yes, I think you may well call her unselfish, Winthrop."

"I know her deepest heart, bless her!" the old man added fondly.

"Oh, Winthrop!" Mrs. Tew was on her feet now, and caught her brother by the hand. "Blind, blind, blind!"

"What do you mean, Augusta?"

"Blind, like all of us old people, who think our children's hearts are open books. Blind with your selfishness, brother dear." She wept bitterly on his shoulder for a moment, and he soothed her mechanically, his thoughts in a whirl.

"I'm sorry to have been so rough, Polly. Tell me everything."

"She never will, brave little thing!"

"It's about —"

"And you wished to exile the boy for three years, and let her hear you tell him that he can't get married and do his silly grubbing together, and—oh!"

"Paul Gardiner!"

"You never guessed, Winthrop?"

He groaned and hid his face.

"Who believes the world's gossip, Polly? I knew her for mine." And the old head came proudly erect again.

"And she's yours still," Mrs. Tew insisted, her voice trembling. "You'd never guess from her telling, brother."

"So dear! so very dear!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes. And dear to me. That's why I spoke. Say that you'll forgive me; because I'm very lonely and old, brother, and—and I want her to be *so* happy."

And Dr. Hare kissed her, the first time in nearly thirty years.

The day had grown old before Barbara saw her grandfather again. Once she had nearly gone to him, ready to tell him that Aunt Tew was meddlesome, and that her life was his for always—this after she saw him come up from the garden, looking very old and worn. Once the old man had nearly sent for her to ask pardon for a year's mistakes—this when he was told that she had left

the house as though for a walk alone. It was mere chance that brought them face to face in the broad hall. She shrank back quickly, and the movement cut him deep. That Barbara should be afraid! Before she could think, she found that he was holding her so that he could look down straight into her eyes.

"I wanted to ask your pardon, Babbie."

"No, no," she murmured, greatly moved.
"What is there to pardon, grandfather?"

He smiled faintly. "An old man's blind obstinacy, dear. His wish to control a young man's destiny."

She tried to protest, but fell to a mere babbling. She seemed to wish to tell him of some fault of her own; but the Master did not listen.

"It 's you that must forgive *me*, child. You and Paul."

Her arms were round his neck now, her face hidden on his shoulder.

"For who knows?" the old man whispered.
"Perhaps I was keeping him from his life's great happiness."

A moment longer they stood there, till the Master gently loosed her embrace. "I wish I could see the boy."

She blushed finely as she answered, "He 'll be here to-morrow, grandfather. See!"

And she leaned over the broad stair-rail to show him a glimpse of the crumpled letter she had carried all day in her hand.

The village knew it before night, for Mr. Austin and Dick Farquhar told the news at the post-office — trumpeted abroad that Paul Gardiner was coming to take up the old place again as his father had wished. And the squires rejoiced noisily, sitting late; and in the morning they rejoiced again, for Paul was among them, a little anxious and haggard, they thought, but heartily glad to shake hands. They speeded him on his way up the long hill with shoutings, and left their prodigal only when they saw Dr. Hare and Barbara waiting on the porch to receive him.

The eastern boundary of Paul's land was a ledge of granite which thrust itself up from among woods of chestnut and ancient oak, bare save for some stunted cedars and struggling saplings along its crest. Here dwelt Paul's tiniest tenant, a decent song-sparrow; and so deserted was the ridge, that she had come to think it her own land. So, on the afternoon of Paul's arrival, the song-sparrow was made very angry when a young man, followed close by a handsome girl, broke noisily through the covert and halted at the top of the rock. She scolded the pair vigorously.

"Hush, hush!" laughed the south wind, who knew the gossip of the land.

"These are my people," murmured the summer's spirit happily. "They are of our race, little scolder,—ours at last."

"They've no business here," the bird declared.

"The wild wood or the city streets—I have seen all things," answered the wind, as he set the leaves adance in the forest and the clouds adrift. "Life and the young world's way—there as here the same. Hush and listen, tiny bird."

"How far does your land go?" Barbara was asking.

"This is the limit on this side. The old fence is just back of us. And do you see that big clump of hickories yonder?"

She looked under the palm of her hand across the wide prospect of meadow and pasture, grove and thicket.

"So much?" she asked vaguely.

"It's a largish place." He hesitated a moment. "But think what fun it will be, what a fine work. A model, Babbie. You wait and see."

"Oldport seems far away," she went on a little breathlessly. "But, Paul, it was n't all wasted, was it?"

Her eyes drew him down beside her.

"We could not tell," he said. "I thought you asked it of me, Babbie."

"I?" she replied. "Perhaps I was wrong, Paul. And—and I'm so sorry if—"

"You showed me the way out," he cried. "It was you that made me come back to life out of the dark." He was close by her now, but she did not move, except to lean forward that he might not guess the heaving of her breast. She dared not look at him.

"I—I can't say the words," he whispered hoarsely. "How I've waited and hoped and dreamed! From the first, Babbie. Long ago until now."

He caught himself up and gestured out over the mellow landscape at their feet.

"The free life!" cried Paul. "The life for us when we're young and can hear the winds' secrets and the birds'!"

"Oh, Paul!"

"Will you try it with me, sweetheart? Find with me the young world's best?"

"You want me? It will be a full life, Paul?" she asked, faithful to her creed.

"You and I!" he answered, drawing her down with a strength that was almost rough under its sweetness. "Together always, Babbie!"

"Yes, yes," she murmured. "Together, Paul. That, anyway."

Then the little bird and the breeze saw her beautiful head lean back; they warmed with the kiss by which she dedicated her sweet life to his. They saw the calm sunshine break across her face.

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